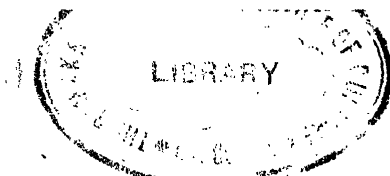

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E. F. KNIGHT.

THE AWAKENING OF TURKEY

A HISTORY OF THE TURKISH REVOLUTION

BY

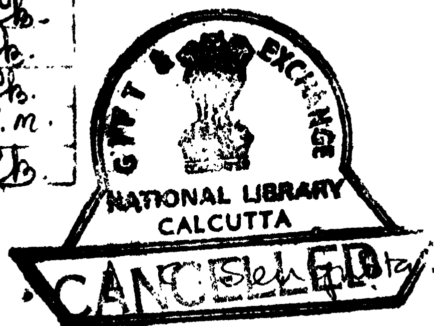
E. F. KNIGHT

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"ALBANIA AND MONTENEGRO," "WHERE THREE EMPIRES MEET,"
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"THE CRUISE OF THE FALCON," "OVERSEAS BRITAIN," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED



LONDON: JOHN MILNE
29 HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.
1909


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PREFACE

In this volume I propose to give an account of the growth of the Young Turk movement, and the story of the revolution which has restored to Turkey her Constitution. I have had some knowledge of Turkey and the Turks since the opening of Abdul Hamid's reign. Thirty years ago I travelled on foot through Northern Albania and other parts of European Turkey, and on several occasions I have been in the country while history was making. I have seen the Turkish armies in the field in the war of 1897. I was in Constantinople and Salonica for some months last year, when I made many friends among the members of the Committee of Union and Progress, who supplied me with a good deal of interesting information concerning the workings of the secret Society which prepared the revolution of last July. Since my return to England my friends in Turkey have kept me well informed as to the progress of events, and have sent to me various documents, including the diary of Niazi Bey, which gives full details of his adventures after he had hoisted the banner of revolt at Resna, and taken to the mountains with his band to raise the Moslem and Christian populations. These documents, which have been translated for

me from the Turkish by Professor Hagopian, have enabled me to give a more complete account of the outbreak of the revolution than has, I believe, yet been published in any Western tongue.

Niazi Bey and Enver Bey, the two young heroes of the revolution, and others who took a leading part in the liberation of their country, have kindly sent me their portraits for insertion in this book. Enver Bey, in February last, when asked to suggest some sentiment which might be printed by the side of his portrait, replied that in his opinion the following words would answer the purpose well: "*The individual who glories that he belongs to that Ottoman army which is the true defence of the freed Ottoman Empire against its foes external and internal.*" Significant words indeed in the light of recent events, and the part that Enver himself has taken in them.

This book was in the press when the counter-revolution broke out on April 13. Fortunately I have avoided prophecy, and therefore find that there is no need to make any alterations in what I have written; but I have added another chapter to the work, in which an account is given of the counter-revolution, the march on Constantinople of the Macedonian army, the triumph of the Young Turks, the deposition of Abdul Hamid, and the proclamation of Turkey's new Sultan, His Majesty Mohammed V.

E. F. K.

London, May 1909.

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THE AWAKENING OF TURKEY

CHAPTER I

The decay of the Ottoman power—The Turkish people—Their virtues—Mussulman fanaticism—Family life.

TURKEY, once so vast and powerful, has been undergoing a gradual dismemberment for the last two centuries. Possession after possession has been wrested from her in Europe, Asia and Africa. On the mainland of Europe, having lost Greece, Bulgaria, Roumania, Servia, Bosnia, Croatia and Herzegovina, as well as those regions on the northern shores of the Black Sea (once a Turkish lake) which now form part of Southern Russia, Turkey is left with but a narrow strip of territory stretching across the centre of the Balkan Peninsula from the Black Sea to the Adriatic.

The despotic system of government in Turkey worked well enough so long as she was a conquering and expanding nation; but so soon as she ceased to be this, and was hemmed in by Christian Powers strong enough to check her advance, the system, being incompatible with progress, failed to hold the Empire together and disintegration set

in. The internal disorders caused by the evils of her administration and the cupidity and treachery of her powerful European neighbours threatened Turkey with extinction. Russia and Austria waged successful wars against her and possessed themselves of her frontier provinces, and at the same time the disaffected Christian populations of European Turkey were encouraged to rise and gain their independence. So it came about that Greece, Bulgaria and other kingdoms and principalities were carved out of Turkey, and up to within a few months ago Christian peoples within and without her frontiers were quarrelling over a further projected act of spoliation that would indeed have been for Turkey the beginning of the end—the partition of Macedonia.

For the oppression, corruption and incompetence that characterised their government the Turkish people themselves were held responsible by a large section of public opinion in Western Europe. There is a saying to the effect that a nation has the government which it deserves, and this may be true if a nation is free to work out its own salvation. But in the case of Turkey the people were allowed no chance of obtaining the government which they deserved; for it was to the interest of Turkey's powerful enemies to conserve the evils of the despotic rule, and whenever the Turks made an effort to put their house in order some Christian Power, fearing lest a reformed

Turkey might prove a strong Turkey, fell upon her with armed force or stood in the way of the projected changes. Moreover, the Powers that were bent upon self-aggrandisement at Turkey's expense saw to it that there should be no peace within her borders and stirred up trouble, exciting the Christian peasants to rise, and fomenting disturbances that might serve as pretexts for a policy of intervention and annexation. No methods were too unscrupulous for the Powers in question. For example, among many other *agents provocateurs* was a certain Dervish, who some years ago, as the paid secret agent of Russia, acting under instructions, preached a holy war against giaours in Asia Minor and excited the Mussulman population to attack the Christian inhabitants. One could quote many other stories to illustrate the treachery of Turkey's enemies and the unfair treatment which has been accorded to her.

And so Turkey, by her own bad government and by the machinations of those who lusted after the rich possessions that were still left to her, was being steadily dragged down to her ruin. Even her best friends despaired of her regeneration; for reform from *without* administered by the Powers would mean the loss of her independence, while reform from *within* seemed impossible of attainment. Turkey appeared to be destined to early effacement from the map of Europe, when, lo! of a sudden, the Turks themselves—all that was best

and most patriotic of the manhood of the Empire—came boldly forward to make a desperate last stand in the defence of the integrity of their beloved fatherland. The "Young Turks" threw off the despotism that had all but destroyed their country and seized the reins of government, displaying a firmness, justice, wisdom and moderation in their almost bloodless revolution that have won for them the admiration of all honest men throughout the civilised world. It looks very much as if these men are about to prove to the world that reform can come from *within* even in Turkey, provided that the Turks are now given the chance which they have never had before, and greedy foes are not permitted to frustrate the aspirations of a people freed at last.

Those Englishmen who know and therefore like and respect the Turkish people rejoice that the ancient friendship between England and Turkey has been restored, and that at last the English people are beginning to realise the injustice that a large section of public opinion has done to a noble race, for over thirty years. There was a time when we understood the Turks better. During the Crimean war our officers had the opportunity of acquiring an intimate knowledge of our allies; many firm friendships were then made which were kept up through life, and so large and influential were the relations thus brought about between the gentlemen of the two countries that

they directed our diplomacy for many years. It may seem, and it ought to be, unnecessary, to preface this little work with an explanation of what manner of men these Turks are; but so grossly have they been misrepresented, and so widespread has been the misconception concerning them, that a few words on this subject may not be out of place.

Five and a half centuries have passed since the Mussulman Turks—a Central-Asian people akin to the Mongols—having seized the Asiatic possessions of the decaying Byzantine Empire, crossed the Bosphorus and, extending their conquests, established themselves firmly in Europe. It is possible that in Asia Minor peasants of pure Turkish blood may still be found, but in European Turkey—that "lumber room of many races"—the strong and noble Turkish stock has been so largely intermingled with a number of other races that the racial characteristics of the Osmanli have practically disappeared. It is more rare to find features of the Mongolian stamp among the modern Turks than among the Christian peoples over whom they rule. The Bulgarians, for example, though speaking a Slav tongue and generally considered as a Slav people, often have the flat faces, the projecting cheek-bones, the small oblique eyes, that betray their descent from the nomads of the Asiatic steppes.

There are no handsomer people in Europe than

the Turks, for here the crossing of many virile breeds has resulted in the development of a very fine race of men. The modern Turk is a Caucasian of the highest type, and combines in himself some of the best qualities of the East and West. It is true that some of his Eastern qualities stand in the way of what the energetic Western world calls progress. The Turk is improvident and often a spendthrift; he is a fatalist, enduring patiently whatever ill fortune or suffering fate may bring him, but displaying an indolent indisposition to struggle against destiny. *Dieu aide qui s'aide* expresses a motive for action which is opposed to his Moslem fatalism. But difficult though he may be to rouse to effort, once roused, he displays great energy and stubbornness of purpose, as has been recently proved to the world by the careful preparation and determined carrying through of the Turkish revolution. At any rate, the faults of the Turks are for the most part amiable ones, and most Englishmen who have travelled in the Near East will agree with an authority on the politics of that region, who replied as follows to a question put to him by an interviewer: "The men that I liked best among all that I met in the East were Turks. In some respects the Turk struck me as more like an Englishman and more like a gentleman than any of the other races except the Maygars. He is a quiet, manly fellow, with great repose and charm

of manner, and does not wear his heart on his sleeve. Europeans who live in the country look on the Turk as an honest man and a man of his word."

It must be remembered that the corrupt officialdom created by the Palace, which had a degrading influence on everything in touch with it, is not representative of the Turkish people. The typical Turk possesses the virtues and the failings of a conquering and dominant race. He is courageous, truthful and honest amid races not conspicuous for truthfulness or honesty, some of which are likewise lacking in courage. The Turk, moreover, is shrewd and gifted with common-sense, and he is not a visionary, as are the Arabs and some other peoples holding the Moslem faith. He has not the quick wits of some European peoples, and may perhaps be described as being somewhat stupid, in the same sense that the Englishman is stupid in the eyes of a neighbouring, brighter race; but this same stupidity, or whatever else we may call it, happily has preserved the Turk from the seeing of visions, and consequently no impossible ideals, no wild dreams for the reconstruction of society, have led his practical and common-sense revolution into those dreadful roads of bloodshed and anarchy which more imaginative nations, shrieking liberty, have blindly followed to tyrannies more oppressive than the worst of despotisms.

Those who know him best also claim that the Turk is hospitable, temperate, devoid of meanness, sincere in his friendships—once he is your friend he is always your friend—and, though his enemies have represented him as very much the reverse, gentle and humane. Of the steadfastness of his friendship I have had experience. When a Turk is your friend you can implicitly trust him, even though he be, what the conditions of his country have sometimes made him, a murderous outlaw. I have had friends among Turkish brigands myself, and Sir William Whittall, who knows the Turks as well as any Englishman can, writes in the following sympathetic way of his robber friend Redjeb: "Peace be to his ashes! He is dead now. Brigand or no brigand, I had a sincere admiration for the man as a man. His faithfulness was like unto that of a dog, and he saved my life at the risk of his own. I have had many incidents with brigands in Asia Minor during my fifty years of sport, and I must say that as long as they were Turks, and I had assisted some friends or villages of theirs, which I always made it a point to do when I frequented the wild regions, I never feared any accidents; and though I might often have been taken, I never was. I would not like to trust Christian brigands in the same fashion."

Gentleness and humanity are among the most marked characteristics of the Turk. With his

ferocity in war when his passions are roused I shall deal later, but of his kindliness and charity in his dealings with his fellow-men there can be no doubt. In no European country are animals treated so kindly as they are in Turkey. A Turk never ill-uses his horse or his ox or his domestic pets, and the wonderful tameness of these creatures in Turkey testifies to this good trait. In Constantinople the pariah dogs lie about the streets in their tens of thousands; they live partly on garbage and partly on the scraps of food which even very poor Turks put out for them. These dogs, though fighting among themselves, display nothing but friendship for, and confidence in, man. They never move for one as they sprawl across the narrow pavements, for they know that no Turk would have the heart to kick them out of the way. A few years ago an American offered a very large sum for the right to clear Constantinople of its pariah dogs, his object being to sell their skins to the glovemakers. The populace raised a howl of indignation when they heard of this, and had not the scheme been abandoned serious riots would have occurred. There is no need for a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals in a Turkish town.

It has often been maintained by the enemies of the Turk that his Mohammedan fanaticism makes his continued occupation of any portion of Christian Europe undesirable. But in justice to

the votaries of the Moslem creed one ought to bear in mind, in the first place, that early Mohammedanism never persecuted the Christian religion in the ferocious fashion that Christianity persecuted Mohammedanism, as for example in Spain. The Moslems were taught that it was their duty to convert or exterminate the idolatrous heathen, but to respect "the people of the book." Did not Mohammed himself spread his cloak upon the ground for the Christian envoys who came to him, treating them with honour; and do not the Mussulmans believe that on the day of judgment the Judge will be Jesus Christ, while the Prophet Mohammed will stand at His side as the Intercessor? When the Turks conquered the territories of the Christians they did not massacre the Christians, neither as a rule did they enslave them, and they did not interfere with their religion; under the more equitable Moslem rule the conquered Greeks found themselves less heavily taxed and generally better off than they had been under the rule of the emperors of the decaying Byzantine Empire. To Jews also, as being worshippers of the one God, they extended a like tolerance; and it was to Turkey—where they are numerous and prosperous and still speak an old Spanish dialect—that the Jews fled when they were driven out of Spain by the persecutions of Ferdinand and Isabella.

That later on the Mohammedans developed a fierce anti-Christian fanaticism is largely due to

centuries of political conflict with Christian peoples, and to the many wars that have been fought to defend Islam against the never-ceasing aggressions of Europe. Within the Turkish Empire itself, for example in Arabia and in Northern Albania, dangerously fanatical Moslem populations are to be found, but these are not people of Turkish blood. The majority of the Turks of any education, though religious, are not fanatics, and on this very account are regarded as indifferent Mussulmans and often frankly called *kafirs* by the bigoted Arabs. Of all the various peoples who inhabit Turkey the Mussulman Turks are undoubtedly the least intolerant. The Christians of different sects there hate each other as no Turk hates a Christian and no Christian hates a Turk. The orthodox Greeks and the Bulgarian schismatics in Macedonia employ all methods of barbarism in their persecutions of each other. When Bulgaria formed part of Turkey the Bulgarians had often to petition the Turks to protect them against the fanatical Greeks. The Catholic Latins, too, in Turkey, being in a minority, would doubtless have been exterminated by their fellow-Christians had it not been for the protection extended to them by the Turks, with the result that they are grateful and loyal to the Ottoman rule. The recent revolution appears to have almost completely brushed away what religious fanaticism there was still left among the Mohammedan Turks, and the Young Turks

themselves, the deliverers of the nation and its real rulers, are entirely free from it. I have conversed with hundreds of these Young Turks and have many friends among them, and in no country have I come across more broadminded and tolerant men. There is no doubt that Islamism has of late years undergone a modernising process, thereby gaining strength. The Sheikh-ul-Islam himself, as head of the *Ulema*—the Doctors of Law whose duty it is to interpret the judicial precepts of the Koran, and who have hitherto composed the most fanatical and Conservative element in Turkey—has been at great pains to impress it upon the Mussulman people, upon whom from his position he exercises such great influence, that the Constitution which has been granted to them, though introducing the principle of complete equality between Mussulmans, Christians and Jews, is quite in accordance with the teachings of the Koran.

As I find myself embarked on this somewhat long defence of the Turkish people I may as well deal with another popular misconception concerning them. It is often urged that the Mohammedan institution of polygamy, with its consequent degradation of women, is incompatible with the progress or with the moral and mental well-being of a race, and that this by itself makes the Turk unfit to rule in Europe. Now it must be remembered that many distinct races profess the

Mohammedan religion, and that some of these are barbarian and others decadent, even as are some of the races that profess Christianity; but it is not fair, because the Turks happen to be Mussulmans, that they should be credited with the faults and vices of some other Mussulman peoples. I have no intention of discussing the effects of polygamy, but I may point out that the Turk, unlike the Arab, appears to be not really polygamous by nature, and that whatever may happen in some other Moslem lands there is no degradation of the women in Turkey. The Turkish peasant women are as far from being degraded as any other women of their class in Europe. It may astonish some Englishmen to learn that the simple-living Turk of the upper and middle classes, though his religion permits him to marry four wives, rarely marries more than one. Of the Young Turks whom I have met, not one, I believe, has more than one wife, and I have heard several of them speak with disapproval of the custom of polygamy. English ladies who have friends among the Turkish ladies have told us how refined, charming and—in these latter days—well educated they are. As most Turkish gentlemen retain the old customs in their family life, the Englishman visiting the house of a Turkish friend has no opportunity of seeing his wife, but his little daughters up to the age of about twelve years are usually brought in by the proud

father to see the visitor, just as they might be in England, when the pretty manners, the intelligence, and the careful education which they have evidently received (they nearly always speak French or some other European language) tell their own tale. The constant and deep veneration which a Turk entertains for his mother through life belies the nonsense that is sometimes talked concerning the condition of the woman in Turkey. The Turkish woman, too, respected and trusted, is much freer than most people in this country imagine, and, as I shall explain later on, the revolution largely owed its success to her brave co-operation.

One ought to be able to form some idea of the character of a people from its literature. Turkish literature, the classical form of which was borrowed from that of Persia, has, like many other things in Turkey, been undergoing a process of modernisation; it has for some years been under the influence of Western, more especially of French, literature; and simplicity and lucidity in the expression of thought has taken the place of the intentional obscurity and artificiality that characterise Oriental writing. Mr. Stanley Lane Poole, in the Turkey volume of the excellent "The Story of the Nations" series, concludes his chapter on Turkish men of letters as follows: "The tone of the imaginative literature of modern Turkey is very tender and

very sad. The Ottoman poets of to-day love chiefly to dwell upon such themes as a fading flower, or a girl dying of decline; and though admiration of a recent French school may have something to do with this, the fancy forces itself upon us, when we read those sweet and plaintive verses, that a brave but gentle-hearted people, looking forward to its future without fear, but without hope, may be seeking, perhaps unconsciously, to derive what sad comfort it may from the thought that all beautiful life must end in dismal death." I have met some of these modern Turkish poets, very manly fellows, though their work has the melancholy tinge described above for which, in my opinion, a long political exile in a foreign land and sorrows for the evil fortunes of their beloved country are largely responsible. But now the days of Turkey's mourning are over, and the more recent poems of these men, who are sturdy patriots and not decadents, are beginning to reflect the triumph, enthusiasm and hope which have characterised the Young Turks since their successful revolt against the despotism.

CHAPTER II

A maligned race—Atrocities—European sympathy with the Ottoman Christians—The Moslems suffering in silence—The "Bag-and-Baggage" policy.

SUCH are the people who but recently were spoken of as the "unspeakable Turks." For thirty years they have suffered from the cruelest of tyrannies and have met with but scant sympathy in Western Europe; for it was "their double misfortune," to quote the words of a writer in the *Times*, "to be oppressed and to be compelled to bear the odium of the cruelty of the oppressor. Their fine qualities were obscured to the world. Their name was a byword for cruelty, violence and fanaticism." In England, if one attempted to defend the Turk, one was regarded as a cold-blooded villain by a great many good people. A considerable section of the English lost their sense of fair play so soon as the Turkish question became at the same time a pawn in our party politics and an excitant of religious bigotry; for one political party became avowedly anti-Turkish, while numbers of well-meaning but unjust Christian people approached the subject from the point of view which made a Mussulman appear everything

that is vile, and so espoused the cause of Turkey's Christian enemies as being of necessity the right one. It was the same sort of sectarian narrow-mindedness that impelled well-known preachers—not members of our State Church—to pray from their pulpits for the success of the Americans in their war with Spain, because Spain was Catholic and the "land of the Inquisition." Thus it came about when Turkey's Christian subjects rebelled in the seventies and the Russians came to their assistance, the Turks were held up to opprobrium as fiends in human shape, the murderers, violators and mutilators of the gentle Christians. Any piece of evidence, second-hand or third-hand, however extravagant, was implicitly believed by these people provided it was against the Turks, whereas whenever charges of committing atrocities were brought against Russians and Bulgarians by the most trustworthy eyewitnesses a very different standard of evidence was set up, and it was held to be incredible that Christians could do these things.

Yet what were the facts? In the first place, there can be no doubt that Russia, bent on the destruction of Turkey and aggrandisement at her expense, had stirred the Bulgarians into rebellion by means of *agents provocateurs*. Travellers who visited Bulgaria in the years preceding the Russo-Turkish war state that the Bulgarian peasantry were more prosperous than any in

Turkey. It is unlikely that they would have risen of their own accord, seeing that they had good reason to be grateful to the Turks, who had come to their rescue when their persecuting Greek fellow-Christians had set themselves to exterminate the Bulgarian Church, language and nationality. In the next place, it is now realised that the Christians and not the Turks initiated the atrocities. The Bulgarians, when they rose, plundered and burnt the villages of the Turks, committed the most shocking cruelties, and massacred unarmed Moslem men, women and children. There is good evidence to show that the Turkish regular troops behaved with consideration to the Christian population until their passions were roused by the barbarities committed by the Bulgarians and Russian Cossacks; then indeed the Turks, exasperated by the sufferings of their co-religionists, engaged in terrible reprisals which aroused the indignation of the civilised world. Ferocious when provoked by the cruelty of others, the Turks are the last people to engage in wanton cruelty, and those who like myself have seen their armies in time of war can vouch for their humane treatment of prisoners and of the civil population in an enemy's country. It must be remembered, too, that the worst atrocities proved against the Turks in Bulgaria were committed not by Turkish regulars but by fanatical Circassians and by the Bashi-Bazouks, ill-disciplined irregulars recruited

from the criminals and neer-do-weels of many races, detested by the Turks themselves for their excesses.

The evil name thus acquired by the Turk during the war with Russia stuck to him through the years that followed, and ignorant prejudice has been wont to put down to him all the cruel deeds committed by the Palace Camarilla, including the terrible Armenian massacres, which were perpetrated, not by the Turks—who regarded these crimes with loathing—but by the savage Kurds and Lazes, at the instigation of those who misruled the unfortunate country. In many ways the Turks have suffered more from the oppressive despotism than their Christian fellow-subjects, but all the sympathy of our humanitarians has been for the latter, and they had little pity or sympathy to spare for the Mussulman. Of late years the political intriguers in Athens, Sofia and Belgrade have been supporting bands of Christian brigands in Macedonia, with the object of forwarding the rival interests of the Greeks, Bulgarians and Servians, in anticipation of the scramble over the partition of that rich country on the breaking up of the Ottoman Empire. These bands have been burning villages and murdering women and children, their excesses being committed against both Christians and Turks. In April 1908, a Bulgarian band burnt a Greek priest at the stake. The incident aroused no

comment. What a howl would have been raised had the Mussulmans done this thing!

So the Christian had plenty of friends and the Turk few. No voices were raised to defend him and to explain the injustice that was done him. Neither was he the man to put his own case before his European critics; for the Turk is better with the sword than with the pen; he is not so cunning as Greek or Bulgarian in carrying on a newspaper campaign, or in the weaving of effective misrepresentations; as a rule he is too proud to defend himself against calumny, and treats with silent contempt those who snarl at him. Moreover the Turk, being essentially a patriot, would not appeal for help to foreign Governments as did the Christians. To quote from an article recently written by Halil Halid: "The Mussulmans suffered as much as, indeed in many places more than, the Christians, from a despotic *régime*. They had submitted, not to the will of their rulers, but to their hard fate, because Turkish patriotism, which has not until recently received fitting attention, was too great to allow them to invite outside interference or help in the national struggle against native tyranny. Never despairing of gaining their end, the people of Turkey have waited for an opportune moment to strike a blow at the foundations of despotism, and this promptly and with the least possible risk of international complications. They have thus submitted

to the indignities and hardships caused by the tyranny of their own rulers, rather than expose themselves to the patronising interference of any foreign Power."

There are thus excuses for the misunderstanding that poisoned the minds of so many Englishmen against our former friends the Turks. Greeks, Bulgarians and others who sought the dismemberment of Turkey and the appropriation of Macedonia voiced their cause loudly, not only with just denunciations of the Turkish oppression of the Christians, but with many plausible inventions. That the Turkish side of the question was so rarely heard was also largely due to the fact that, during the few years preceding the revolution, it became ever more difficult for Englishmen in Turkey to have friendly intercourse with the Turks themselves. The intervention of our Government to introduce reforms into Turkey, and the action of our Balkan and Armenian Committees, which were wrongly believed by the Sultan and his advisers—and appear still to be believed by all Germans and Austrians—to be the agents in advance of our perfidious Government, so intensified the hatred of the Turkish despotism against England that it was practically made a crime for a Turk, especially if he was suspected of Liberal tendencies, to receive an Englishman into his house. If a Turk was even seen to speak to an Englishman in Constantinople the spies

reported the fact to the Palace; and, as I shall explain later, to manifest sympathy for the British cost many a Turk his life and liberty. Thus the intelligent tourist, or the globe-trotting M.P., who visited Constantinople in those days, was not in a position to pick up accurate information. His doings and goings would probably be watched by spies, especially if he was a member of the Balkan Committee. Though he knew it not, he would find no opportunity of conversing with Turks save such as were the secret agents of the Palace. His dragomans would be Greeks or Armenians, who might speak to him of the grievances of the Christian subjects of the Sultan, but certainly not of the grievances of the Turks. So, too, was it with most of the journalists. If they were anti-Turks they sought information from the members of the Greek and Bulgarian bands, and if they were pro-Turks they were on friendly terms with officialdom—they had audiences with ministers, possibly with the Sultan himself; and as all Turks are very polite, they often left the audience-chamber charmed with despotism, and explained, in the papers they represented, that the Young Turk party was either a myth or a small and impotent group of malcontents, who, during a sojourn in Paris, had absorbed the wild theories of the internationalists and anarchists.

To drive the Turks "bag and baggage" out of Europe was the proclaimed policy of many

ignorant humanitarians. The explusion of the Turkish rule would indeed have been followed by a bag-and-baggage exodus, for but a small minority of Mussulmans would have remained in the land to be governed by a Christian race. In former years Russia and Austria were regarded as the probable inheritors of the "Sick Man's" European territories, and it is certain that the rule of either of these would be intolerable to the Turks. One remembers how the Circassian and Bosnian Mussulmans emigrated in large numbers into Turkey when their countries were occupied respectively by the Russians and Austrians. These emigrations were accompanied by great suffering and loss of life, due largely to the incapacity and callousness of the Turkish Government, which, while undertaking to found colonies of the refugees in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and other parts of the Empire, practically left them to starve. The humanitarians would have realised the cruelty of their proposal had they seen, as I did, the pitiful sights in Northern Albania thirty years ago. The Bosnian Mussulman peasants, escaping from the rule of Austria, were pouring into that portion of Turkish territory. Men, women and children were slowly crawling across the snow-covered country in the bitter winter weather, weak and listless with hunger and cold, often frost-bitten, hundreds of them failing by the way, so that it was a common

thing to see frozen corpses lying by the roadside. The Albanians themselves were in a half-starving condition after the ravages of the war, and could render little assistance to the wretched refugees. Under the bag-and-baggage scheme there would be an exodus of millions and unimaginable suffering. Had Europe committed this crime the retribution might have been heavy. The Sultan would still have been the Caliph of the Moslem world, and the Turks, driven into Asia, might have reformed their Government and set their house in order, even as they are doing now ; but the Turkish awakening, instead of taking its present form, would have taken that of Pan-Islamism—the combination against the Christians of all the Mussulman peoples.

The humane bag-and-baggage proposal would have meant the expulsion of nearly half the population of Turkey and the replacement of the Turkish by some other rule. But the Russianisation or Germanisation of the Balkan Peninsula would have been more disagreeable to the Christian population than even the domination of the Turk, while it would have been impossible to divide the country among the neighbouring states in such a way as to satisfy the inhabitants. In the peninsula are jumbled up remnants of every race and creed, not collected into separate districts, but intermingling with each other, hating each other, jealous of each other—Servians dreaming of the larger

Servia, Bulgarians of the larger Bulgaria, Greeks of the larger Greece—their territorial claims, based upon race distinctions, all overlapping each other; an entanglement of rival rights and interests impossible of unravelment. Neither of these Christian races would submit to be ruled by the other. For example, there can be no doubt that a Bulgarian would rather be governed by the Moslem Turk than by the Greek. And amid all these races, more numerous than any of them taken singly, are the ruling Turks, who own the fee simple of the land by the best of titles, conquest. They are the strong race whose bearing is in strong contrast to the servility of some of the races in their midst. They are the masterly people fit to rule the others; for whatever peace fanatics may say, only people ready to fight bravely in defence of their possessions are fit to own possessions. We have not arrived at the state of civilisation when it can be otherwise. Even our humanitarians, who unknown to themselves have some of the old Adam in them, respect those who can use the sword; for whereas they sympathise with the aspirations of the plucky Bulgarians they pay little heed to the Greeks, who, though the noisiest of the claimants to Turkey's heritage and having vast pretensions which extend to every piece of territory in Europe and Asia that ever belonged to any of the states of ancient Greece, are among the feeblest people in the world in the practice of war.

It needs a strong rule to keep the rival Christian sects of the Balkan Peninsula in order and to prevent them from cutting each other's throats, lopping off each other's ears and burning each other's priests. The Turks can provide that strong rule; and if we add to the Turks the Mussulmans of other race in the country—Albanians, Moslem Bulgarians, Circassians and others—we have nearly half the total population united by a common religion, as the Christians certainly are not. The Young Turks may now prove that Lord Palmerston, after all, was right when he said that the rule of the Mussulman Turk was the only one that could combine the different races and sects of Turkey in one kingdom. The Turks have no ambition to recover the territory which they have lost, but they are determined to hold on to what still remains to them. With a strong Turkey, in close alliance with a federation of the Slav states to the north of her, we may yet see a quiet and contented Balkan Peninsula.

CHAPTER III

Early reformers—The Palace and the Sublime Porte—The deposition of Abd-ul-Aziz—The opening of Abdul Hamid's reign—Midhat Pasha's fate—The overthrow of the Turkish Constitution.

It is about a century ago that Western ideas began to influence the better Turkish statesmen and efforts were made to reform the system of government and bring it into harmony with modern civilisation. Mahmud II, who came to the throne in 1808, and his successor Abd-ul-Mejid, who died in 1861, were wise and reforming monarchs, who were advised by enlightened statesmen such as Reshid Pasha, at whose instance in 1839 the edict known as the Hatti-Sherif of Gulhane was promulgated. This edict, which has been called the Magna Charta of Turkey, promised many useful administrative and judicial reforms, and secured to the Christian as well as Mussulman subjects of the Sultan security for their lives, honour and property. Again, in 1856, after the Crimean war, the Hatti Houmaioum Firman announced among other things the complete equality in the eyes of the law of the Christians and Mussulmans in Turkey. I need

scarcely say that these solemn engagements have been wholly ignored by Turkey's recent rulers.

In 1861, on the death of Abd-ul-Mejid, Abd-ul-Aziz succeeded to the throne of Othman. He was assisted by a group of patriotic and able statesmen, among whom were Fuad Pasha, Rushdi Pasha, Aali Pasha and Midhat Pasha; and for the first ten years of his reign he ruled his country well. He made the Turkish navy one of the most formidable in Europe; he organised the army that fought so stubbornly at Plevna; justice was administered, and the Press was free to criticise the Government. But this promising monarch, unfortunately for his country, broke away from the tutelage of wise men and fell under the influence of evil advisers. On the death of Aali Pasha in 1872, Mahmud Nedim Pasha, a man who was fanatically anti-European and uneducated, became the chief adviser of the Sultan, and was soon created Grand Vizier. The character of the Sultan seemed now to undergo a complete change; his policy became retrograde and reactionary; he drove from his side the good and wise and surrounded himself with corrupt parasites, who were in many cases the ready tools of Ignatieff; for the Russian diplomacy had gained the ascendency in Constantinople, and, as usual, was employed in intriguing against the party of reform and organising the disruption of the Ottoman Empire.

And now commenced that final struggle between the Palace and the Sublime Porte which has resulted in the overthrow of the Despotism. The Sultan, though the absolute head of the Church and State, had hitherto left the administration of the Empire to his Cabinet of Ministers chosen by himself, whose office is known as the Sublime Porte. Abd-ul-Aziz attempted to break down this system, and to centre in himself the entire rule of the country; soon the ministers became mere puppets, and the Palace was made paramount. The Sultan assumed the complete control of the Treasury, and refused to give any account of the public revenues which he wasted.) He contracted loans in Europe under onerous conditions that endangered the very independence of the Empire.

The patriots among the Turkish statesmen, who had been cast out from all direction of public affairs, almost despaired of their country, and the risings in Herzegovina and Bosnia, presaging European intervention, seemed to many to be the beginning of the end. The great Midhat Pasha, whom the Young Turks speak of as the first martyr of their cause, had the temerity to seek a two-hours' private audience of the Sultan, and pointed out to him with such forcible eloquence the corruption of his administration, the incapacity of his Grand Vizier, and the certain destruction to which he was dragging his country,

that Abd-ul-Aziz was terrified, his eyes were for a moment opened, and he saw the dreadful truth; so deposing Mahmud Nedim he appointed Midhat and Rushdi as his principal ministers and advisers. For three months only these reforming statesmen were left in power, for Midhat Pasha was suddenly disgraced because he had expressed indignation when a favourite odalisque of the monarch had sent a negro to him to ask him to appoint one of her servants to a provincial vice-governorship. The system of Mahmud Nedim was reintroduced; things went from bad to worse; justice became openly venal; ranks in the services were sold by Palace favourites; the entire administration became grossly corrupt and disorganised; and at last, in 1875, the Turkish Government had to declare itself insolvent.

Turks who had the welfare of their country at heart felt that it was necessary to put a forcible end to this state of things. On May 22, 6,000 Softas, the theological students attached to the mosques, invaded the Sublime Porte and clamoured for the deposition of the Grand Vizier, while some thousands of others demonstrated in front of the Palace. The Sultan, terrified, yielded to these demands, deposed Mahmud Nedim, recalled Rushdi Pasha; and a Cabinet of reforming statesmen, including Midhat Pasha, was formed. Then came the famous *coup d'état.*

The ministers, having reason to doubt the good faith of the monarch, decided to depose him. In the night of May 30, 1876, the Palace was surrounded by troops, the Chief Eunuch was called up and was ordered to awake his master and hand him the *fetva*, or decree of the Sheikh-ul-Islam, Hairoullah Effendi, in his capacity of chief expounder of the sacred law, a decree to which even a Sultan must submit. The *fetva* was set forth in the form of a question and answer as follows: "If the Head of the Believers has so lost his reason as to ruin the State, which God has confided to his care, by foolish expenditure, by wild caprices, and if the continuation of this misrule is likely to bring on a situation which will destroy the sacred interests of the country, is it permissible to leave that man at the head of affairs, or ought one to deprive him of his power? The answer is, that he ought to be deprived of his power." Thus the Sheikh-ul-Islam, in the name of the Mohammedan religion, approved of the revolution of 1876, even as did another Sheikh-ul-Islam declare himself in favour of the recent Young Turk revolution and the granting of the Constitution. It is important to remember that despotism is not (as many suppose that it is) in accord with the teachings of the Koran, and that constitutional government ought not to be acceptable to good Mussulmans. Islam, as the Young Turks point out, condemns tyranny and encourages

peoples to rule themselves. The following, for example, are passages from the Koran which have been much quoted in Turkey of late: "God loveth not tyrants"; "When a people direct their affairs by consulting among themselves they shall get their reward."

So Abd-ul-Aziz was deposed and Murad V became Sultan in his place. The new monarch issued a proclamation by which he promised to carry out the reforms advocated by his minister Midhat Pasha; and the well-wishers of Turkey rejoiced. But unhappy Turkey was not to be freed yet, and an event happened that turned hope into despair. Four days after his deposition Abd-ul-Aziz either committed suicide or was assassinated in the palace to which he had been removed. If he was murdered, he who committed the crime must have been the greatest enemy of Turkey, and none of the ministers could have had anything to do with a deed that upset all their plans for the regeneration of their country. So soon as Abd-ul-Aziz was found dead his Circassian aide-de-camp, Hassan, rushed to Midhat Pasha's house, where the ministers were assembled, and assassinated two of these whom Turkey could ill spare, Avni Pasha and Rachid Pasha. This succession of tragic events so shook the weak mind of the new Sultan that he became hopelessly insane. After a reign of only three months it became necessary to depose him, and the legitimate heir,

MIDHAT PASHA. The first martyr of the young Turk cause. He framed Turkey's Constitution 32 years ago. He was exiled when the Sultan Abdul Hamid usurped the despotic power. In 1884, while a prisoner in a fortress in Arabia, he was strangled by order of the Palace. The words written by the side of the portrait signify: "Presented to Mr. Knight as a souvenir of friendship by Ali Haider, the son of Midhat Pasha."



his brother Abdul Hamid, the present Sultan of Turkey, ascended the throne, in the autumn of 1876.

Abdul Hamid, however, was not permitted to grasp the sceptre until he had signed a document by which he undertook to grant a Constitution to his people and to rule with justice. Indeed, he was ready to make any promises, and accepted without reserve the liberal principles of Midhat Pasha and the reformers. No one in Turkey believes that he was sincere, and Sefer Bey recounts in *La Revue*, how, on the very day of his succession, Abdul Hamid, on his return to the Palace, after having gone through the traditional ceremony of buckling on the sword of Othman, spoke in the following words to a well-known Turkish general of his entourage: "It is Reshid Pasha who is responsible for everything that has happened; it is that great criminal who made my father sign that accursed firman under the pressure of Europe, and by giving stupid illusions to the Turkish people has led them into wrong ways. The government which our nation needs is an absolute despotism, and not the pernicious *régime* of liberty which Europe practises. I shall know how to put order in the ideas of the people, but before all, I must make my position secure and get rid of the wretches who deposed my uncle."

At the opening of the new reign, however, the

reformers looked to the future with hope. Midhat Pasha was appointed Prime Minister, and began to work out his scheme for the regeneration of Turkey. He framed his Constitution, which established the equality of all races and creeds, and took steps to crush the rebellion in European Turkey that was threatening to bring about a European war. Midhat was beloved by educated and patriotic Turks, and was strongly supported by the people; his position seemed unassailable. But before he had been four months on the throne Abdul Hamid struck his first blow at liberty, and showed what manner of man he was. Midhat was suddenly summoned to the Palace, and on arriving there was informed that his exile had been determined upon and that he must forthwith board a vessel that was awaiting him in the Bosphorus with steam up, and betake himself beyond the confines of the Ottoman Empire. Then the Sultan set himself to put out of the way the other men who had taken a part in the deposition of Abd-ul-Aziz. Rushdi Pasha and the Sheikh-ul-Islam were exiled to remote parts of the Empire, while many less distinguished Liberals disappeared, being either killed or imprisoned.

Midhat Pasha, the greatest ot the Turkish reformers, as an exile, lived in several European capitals, studied on the spot the principles of decent government, and formed plans for the

amelioration of the condition of his unfortunate country when the opportunity should arrive. The Sultan appears to have come to the conclusion that his ex-Grand Vizier might be as dangerous to the Despotism while in Europe as he had been in Turkey. A plot, the details of which are well known, was laid to bring about Midhat's destruction. He was led to believe that the Sultan had repented of his injustice, had come to see the errors of his illiberal policy, and desired that the able statesman should return to Turkey to give his valuable assistance in the reorganisation of the Empire. So, after a long exile, Midhat, accepting a treacherous invitation, came back to his native land, and was made Governor of Syria. Shortly after his appointment he was denounced to the Palace by false accusers, who were prepared to prove that Abd-ul-Aziz had been assassinated by Midhat's orders. After an iniquitous trial, by judges who pretended to credit the obvious inventions of suborned witnesses, he was found guilty, and as it might have been dangerous to execute a man so much beloved and respected, he was condemned to imprisonment in a fortress in Arabia. There he was treated with great inhumanity and deprived of all the comforts and some of the necessaries of life. As his strong constitution resisted these privations for three years, he was strangled in May 1884, by order of his persecutors, and his

head was sent to the Palace, so that there should be no doubt about his death.

The Sultan had rid himself of all the chief friends of liberty immediately after his accession to the throne, but, cautious and fearful by nature, he took no further immediate steps to impose absolute despotism upon his people. Mainly with the object of hoodwinking England and winning her good-will at the critical period preceding the outbreak of the war with Russia, he proclaimed the Constitution of Midhat Pasha, and a Turkish Parliament was allowed to meet. The Sultan imposed his will upon the Parliament and reduced it to impotence; but there were many patriotic deputies who spoke their minds freely and defied the monarch's wrath. At last, in February 1878, shortly before the conclusion of the treaty of peace with Russia at St. Stephano, the Sultan dissolved both Houses, and, with pretended reluctance, suspended the Constitution. He next proceeded to deprive the Sublime Porte of all power and to make the Palace supreme. The ministers became mere puppets, whose submission was bought by the licence that was allowed to them to embezzle the public funds. The control of the army and navy, of foreign affairs, of the finances of the Empire, every branch of the administration, the appointment of every official were in the hands of the Sovereign and his corrupt Camarilla. Having a pampered Prætorian Guard to

enforce his will, he held Constantinople under martial law. It was a reign of terror; he spared none who were not for him. From the dissolution of Turkey's first Parliament in 1878 until the proclamation of the Constitution in 1908, Turkey was oppressed by one of the most demoralising and destructive tyrannies that the world has known. For the Ottoman Empire those thirty years were the most unhappy and disastrous of its long history.

CHAPTER IV

The Sultan's policy—The decay of the Empire—The Camarilla —The spread of corruption—The isolation of Turkey— The oppression of the Moslem Turks—The espionage— The tabooed British—The sufferings of the army.

THE Sultan's policy was directed by a narrow fanaticism. It is possible that he sincerely believed that a cruel despotism was the best rule for Turkey. He hated the Christians, and it was his ambition to realise the dream of the Pan-Islamites, to gather together round himself as the Caliph all the followers of the faith of whatever race, so as to form a strong political-religious confederation of Moslems that should keep in check the aggressions of Europe and liberate Mussulman peoples now subject to the Christians. It was his aim, too, to withdraw all such rights as his predecessors had granted to the Christian subjects of Turkey and to revoke the irritating privileges which the Capitulations had given to foreigners within Turkish territory—not in themselves ignoble designs, but which were prosecuted by such ignoble methods as to nearly destroy instead of strengthening the Moslem supremacy in Turkey.

It is not necessary here to follow the history of Turkey under the Hamidian *régime*. How, defeated in war, she was bereft of vast and rich territories; how the splendid navy, created by Abd-ul-Aziz, was allowed to fall into decay, so that when Turkey was at war with Greece in 1897, she found herself with not a single ship that could be made fit to put to sea; how her fine army was starved and neglected, so that it became demoralised and helpless to defend her against her foes; how corruption and the wholesale appropriation of public moneys by the creatures of the Palace brought her finances into so hopeless a condition that she was tied hand and foot by her foreign creditors, and had therefore to submit to the control of several departments of her internal administration by commissions appointed by the Christian Powers; how justice was bought and sold, and promotion in all the services was awarded to the parasite or the highest bidder; how, in consequence of the massacres of Christians and the impotence of her Government to maintain order, Turkish patriots were humiliated by seeing a foreign gendarmerie forced upon her by the Powers; how, in short, Turkey became so weak and effete that even to her friends her disintegration appeared to be the inevitable end, delayed only by the jealousy of the rival Powers, who, fearing for what is called "the balance of Power" in Europe, bolstered up the "Sick Man" and

professed a desire to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. All these things were regarded with dismay by the Turks, and precipitated the revolution against the Government responsible for the rapid decay of the nation; but in this chapter I will confine myself to an account of the particular forms which the despotic oppression of the Mussulman Turks assumed, until at last that oppression became so insupportable as to goad into rebellion not only the upper classes, but even the ignorant Turkish peasants, who, serving so patiently and bravely in the army, had hitherto been ever faithful with the faithfulness of a dog to the Sultan's person.

The Sultan has proved himself to be in many respects a man of great strength of character and of exceptional ability; a subtle diplomatist, he was able to play the European Powers against each other; and he succeeded in the main object of his life, centralising all authority in himself at the cost of indefatigable personal labour, and making himself the supreme master of his country. He might indeed, with his sagacity, have been an excellent monarch of the despotic Oriental type, working for the good of his people, had it not been for one failing which grew into an obsession and brought much woe to Turkey, and this failing was fear. Abdul Hamid was haunted by a perpetual fear of assassination; he had no trusted friends, and suspected all men; and therefore

cowardice, as is always the case, called in cruelty and oppression to protect itself. He subordinated the welfare of his country to his elaborate schemes for self-preservation. He deliberately weakened the Ottoman Empire, dividing it against itself, and demoralised his subjects so that there should be no element in the State or group of individuals strong enough to attempt his overthrow. Thus he stirred up strife between the different Christian sects and inflamed Mussulman fanaticism, so that populations which before his time had lived side by side in peace, tolerating, if not loving each other, fell upon each other with sword and fire; and when his oppressed subjects rebelled he quenched their spirit with dreadful massacres.

So, too, was it in his dealings with individuals, in the selection of his creatures and in his treatment of them. A tyrant who is enslaving his country naturally looks upon honest patriots with suspicion as potential rebels. He cannot well employ the services of such men as his advisers and ministers. He also mistrusts ability, as giving a power to be dangerous. Thus Turkish gentlemen of the official class, who possessed distinction, brains and probity, had very little share in the administration. The Camarilla of the Sultan was mainly composed of base and illiterate though cunning people; avaricious and unscrupulous parasites, of whom the most influential were not Turks, but Syrians, Arabs, and Circassians; men

who, being devoid of true patriotism and having the attainment of wealth as their one aim, would have no reason for joining in a conspiracy against the Despotism. But the Sultan mistrusted even these ready instruments of his will. Having a profound knowledge of the evil side of human nature he played off one creature against the other, made them jealous of each other, paid them to spy upon each other, prevented any sort of friendship between them, and governed them by terror. The Camarilla, selling public appointments, spread the poison of corruption that threatened to demoralise a whole people. To quote the words of a Young Turk writer: "There was left in Turkey but one ideal, but one opening for those who aspired, and that was to amass riches and spend them in gross sensual amusement. But, for the attainment of this, one had to declare oneself the spy of the Palace, and to give proofs of one's servility by sacrificing father, mother, brother, friends, principles, conscience, all patriotic sentiments and all humanity."

It is wonderful that there were any honest men holding high positions during this period, but such there undoubtedly were, though these were for the most part narrow-minded fanatics who favoured Abdul Hamid's Pan-Islamic schemes, and were pleased to co-operate with him in depriving the Christians of what liberties they possessed, and seizing pretexts to massacre them. But to the

highest offices of the State, such as the Grand Vizierate, the Sultan found himself compelled at times, in self-defence, to appoint men of capacity and high character; especially so when, after happenings more iniquitous than usual, the relations between Turkey and the European Powers became dangerously strained. Thus Kiamil Pasha, concerning whose good work for his country I shall have to speak later, was several times Grand Vizier, to be deposed as soon as he could be dispensed with; for he was not the man to be obsequious to the despot, and he was not afraid of uttering disagreeable truths. On the whole, however, conspicuous ability became a disqualification for office in Turkey; and for a public man to be popular was a crime.

In order to insure their blind obedience to him as the Padisha, it was Abdul Hamid's aim to keep his Mussulman subjects in a state of ignorance. He knew that the liberal ideas of modern Europe had been planted in Turkey, and he determined to uproot them, or at any rate prevent their spread. He endeavoured, not without some success, to cut Turkey off from the influence of Western progress. His subjects, with certain exceptions, were not permitted to travel in foreign countries, and even their goings to and fro within the Empire were regarded with suspicion. It has been suggested that he allowed his navy to rot because he feared lest his sailors should be inoculated with ideas

about liberty while visiting Western ports; at any rate, he appears to have connived at the embezzlement by his Minister of Marine of ten millions sterling, which were to have been devoted to naval expenditure. Realising, however, that the preservation of the Empire depended upon the reorganisation of his army, the Sultan was compelled to provide for the education of his officers, some of whom were sent to Germany and other foreign countries, while thousands were passed through the Turkish military schools in Turkey itself, where they were instructed by European teachers. Officers thus trained, however, were looked upon as somewhat dangerous, and were attached to the Army Corps in various parts of the Empire, but not to that portion of the Turkish army which guards Constantinople, the centre of the Despotism and the Sultan's person; for there the pampered fanatical troops, faithful to their master, were officered by men who had risen from the ranks, some of whom could not even read, but who could be relied upon to carry out the orders given to them by the Palace.

All progress was paralysed by the fear that ruled at the Palace. The introduction of typewriters and telephones as being of possible use to conspirators was prohibited. The Press had no liberty; the strictest censorship was exercised over all printed matter that came into Turkey. To be found in possession of a work of Herbert Spencer's,

for example, would mean imprisonment. The censor would not consent to the production of *Hamlet* in the theatre, because in that play the killing of a monarch is represented on the stage.

Under the Hamidian *régime* there was of course no recognition of the inviolability of the domicile. The houses of educated Turks were frequently broken into by the police in search of forbidden literature. To such an extent was the right of public meeting denied, that it was not safe for three or four friends to sit and chat together in a *café*. A Turk could not give a dinner-party in his own house without the permission of the authorities, and even if he obtained that permission, some police agent would as likely as not be sent to sit at his table, as an uninvited and most unwelcome guest, taking mental notes of the conversation and smelling out conspiracies.

It was altogether a hideous system that naturally bred all manner of tyrants great and petty, who being the creatures of the Palace were enabled to oppress the people with impunity. There was, for example, the infamous Fehim Pasha, chief of the secret police, who abused his official authority to gratify his every whim and passion, plundering and blackmailing those whose possessions aroused his avarice, killing those who stood in his way, and, whenever his fancy was attracted, forcibly carrying off to his harem the wives and daughters of peaceable citizens—a wretch so hated that so soon as

the Constitution was announced, the mob at Broussa, fearing him no longer, fell upon him and tore him to pieces.

Then there was the great army of paid informers who preyed upon the people. The system of espionage which Abdul Hamid in his fear devised to protect himself against conspiracy and assassination was so oppressive and cruel in its working as to render almost insupportable the lives of such of his subjects as were regarded as suspects on account of their good birth, enlightenment, patriotism, or honourable character. The expenditure on this espionage sometimes amounted to as much as two million pounds a year. The spies were everywhere, and were of every rank and condition. Ministers were paid to spy on each other. A man's house-servants, the Greek hotel-waiter who brought him his cup of coffee, the Armenian dragoman who guided the simple foreign tourist, were paid to watch and listen and send their reports to the Palace. Spies would gain a man's friendship, worm themselves into his confidence, and then denounce him. People were sometimes betrayed by their own relations. All the social relationships of the family, the military college, the regiment and the navy were undermined; for if the Palace suspected a man it would spare no effort to buy the treason of those nearest to him. There was an atmosphere of terror and universal distrust. When the spy system was introduced into the

army it destroyed all *esprit de corps.* It became known that there were spies among the officers of every unit, whose business it was to watch their brother officers; with the result that there was no comradeship even among officers of the same regiment, each suspecting the other of being the secret agent of the Palace; they never messed together, and in many cases had never spoken to each other.

And even the spies themselves had other spies set to spy upon them by the all-suspicious ruler. The Sultan's spies were in every foreign capital—sometimes working with its secret police—to keep an eye upon the exiles and seek evidence to entrap friends of theirs in Turkey who might be in communication with them. And from this great army of spies a flood of denunciations poured into the Palace. The denunciations were well paid for, so the supply never failed, even when the terrorised people avoided any conduct that could be construed into a political offence. *Agents provocateurs* incited men to acts that would afford ground for accusation. The spies did not hesitate to bear false testimony against the innocent, and, as in the case of Midhat Pasha, the creatures of the Palace, when desirous of ruining some individual, employed wretches to trump up the tale that would condemn him. A friend of mine suffered long imprisonment because the secret police searched his house and there pretended to

find compromising papers which they themselves had forged. It is scarcely necessary to add that vile people availed themselves of the system to levy blackmail by threatening denunciation.

The denounced were often condemned without any pretence of a legal trial. Many of the best men in the country disappeared from their families never to return, their fate the *oubliette*, or death by the cord, or the traditional dropping into the Bosphorus of a sack containing the victim. Exile or imprisonment for a term of years were the punishments awarded for minor indiscretions —chance words expressing disapproval of the methods of the Palace, or the possession of a foreign paper of liberal views. People were tortured in the Palace to betray their friends and relations. Thousands of families in Turkey have had to mourn members torn away after denunciations by the spies. After the proclamation of the Constitution about seventy thousand exiles returned to Turkey from remote parts of the Empire (the Siberias of Turkey) and from foreign countries, and how many thousands have been put to death or have died in captivity no man can tell.

I may mention here that during the latter years of the Hamidian *régime* many Turks were denounced and suffered because they manifested friendship for the English. The Turks are not a fickle people, and despite the thirty years' aloofness of the English through misconceptions

regarding the Turkish people, the Turks themselves have ever remained faithful to their old friends, and the present enthusiasm for our country is no passing wave. But the Palace hated the British Government which had attempted to force reforms upon Turkey, and it suspected all Englishmen of sharing the views of the Balkan Committee. On the other hand, German influence became ascendant at the Palace about twelve years ago, and remained so until the overthrow of the Despotism; for German diplomacy is not sentimental; it did not worry the Palace with humanitarian pressure for the sake of securing the better government of the unfortunate subjects of the Sultan; and it even assisted the Porte to thwart the efforts of the other Powers. Its main object was to further German commercial interests. The German Embassy in Constantinople squeezed concessions out of the Turkish Government by curious methods, and knew well how to make use of Palace intrigues and corrupt officialism. Helped by their Government, German syndicates, with cynical disregard of the fact that they were hurrying the country to its ruin, worked in league with those in the Palace, who were ready to betray their fatherland for a bribe, and secured the Bagdad railway concession with its iniquitous kilometric guarantee, and other privileges, on terms far more onerous for Turkey than could

have been obtained from other quarters, thus burdening the country with unfair obligations, which now cripple her efforts for reform and reorganisation.

But I must not digress into the tortuous ways of Turkish finance, which is outside the scope of this book. Suffice it to say that German influence at the Palace undoubtedly intensified the Sultan's hatred of England, and the obsequious spies received their cue. The English in Turkey were in no wise molested, but they were declared taboo by the authorities. For a Turk to be even seen talking to an Englishman was dangerous. Turks feared to look towards the English Embassy as they passed it. They were forbidden to visit certain English establishments, such as the English book-shop in Pera, and the quaint old inn in Galata, built long ago by the Genoese, where, with a retired British sea-captain as host, naval officers, British and Turkish, had been wont to forgather in good fellowship. The spies were busily employed in denouncing such Turks as were supposed to be Anglophil. A friend of mine who at that time held a good appointment and enjoyed a large income, was reported by the spies as having intrigued to bring the British fleet to Constantinople. He was imprisoned for five years. He was released with all other political prisoners after the successful revolution, and came back to the world to find himself penniless; to

learn that his wife, having first become blind from unceasing weeping, had died practically in a starving condition, and that his children were living on charity.

It ought not to be forgotten by Englishmen that when we were engaged in our last war with the Boers, and all Europe was reviling us, the Turks alone—and notably those of the educated classes who now rule the country as the Young Turk party—were in sympathy with us, and some of them suffered in consequence. A number of young officers of the army and navy, and others, put their names to a document in which they expressed their hope that the British arms would prove successful in South Africa, and this they carried to the British Embassy to present to our then Ambassador. The Palace heard of this; the spies were set to work to ascertain what names appeared upon the incriminating document, and one by one every one of these men disappeared, being snatched up to be put into prison, or, to be sent into exile. One of these young officers, Sirret Bey, escaped from those who arrested him, hid himself for some time in the guise of a cook in the British Consulate, and is now one of the leading members of the Committee of Union and Progress in Salonika.

This dreadful system of espionage and the suppression of all intellectual liberty fell harder on the educated Mussulmans than on the Christian

subjects of the Sultan, for despotism had no such fear of the Greek or Armenian as it had of the patriotic Turk, and the Christians therefore were not so closely watched and had more chance of public appointment. The Christians also had one important advantage over the Mussulman Turks in so much as their privileges allowed them to establish schools uncontrolled by the State, which provided a more liberal education than was possible in the Moslem schools. It can be readily understood, therefore, how patriotic Turks of the upper and middle classes, ground down under this tyranny that gave them no voice in the administration and placed over them mean men who were hurrying the country to its destruction, were prepared to join in any movement that promised a fair chance of overthrowing the Hamidian *régime*.

It is also easy to understand that the Christians, who during this reign were deprived of some of their ancient rights, who were treated with a more galling contumely than ever before, as a subject and despised people, and lived in perpetual dread of massacre and outrage, welcomed the revolution that placed them on an equality with the Mussulmans; but how it came to pass that the despotism became so intolerable to the masses of the Turkish people as to excite to rebellion even the patient, religious Moslem peasants, who had hitherto revered the Sultan as their spiritual ruler as well as their monarch, and had been blindly and

fanatically obedient to his will, requires some explanation. The thrifty, hard-working Turkish peasants suffered as much as the Christians from the evils of the administration; they paid the same heavy taxes, and, like their Christian neighbours, they were cheated by the tax-collectors, being often illegally mulcted and most harshly treated by petty tyrants. The provincial officials did not receive their pay regularly, and so recouped themselves by corrupt practices. Thus the rich, by paying bribes, succeeded in many cases in avoiding taxation altogether, and many unfair exemptions were allowed; with the result that in some places nearly all the burden of taxation fell upon the poor. The peasants were shrewd enough to perceive that the money thus wrung from them did not produce any good for themselves or their country, but went to enrich the ruling clique, and that Constantinople swallowed up the huge sums that were collected in every part of the Empire. They knew that there were Ministries established in costly palaces and maintaining a large number of well-paid officials, while the result of this extravagant expenditure was not anywhere to be seen. Thus there was a Ministry of Public Works, but there were no roads or irrigation works; a Ministry of Police, but no protection of life and property; a Ministry of Justice, and no justice; a Ministry of War, and a starved army.

But the stoical Mussulman peasants, whose faithfulness is as that of a dog, were loth to think ill of their Sultan, and they put the blame upon his ministers as doing wrong without his knowledge. Oppression and unjust taxation by themselves would not have driven these people into revolt, and the Young Turk movement would have had small chance of success, had not Abdul Hamid neglected to secure—what would have been so easy to secure—the continued fidelity and affection of his army, of which the splendid peasantry of the country form the backbone. I have explained that the Sultan was careful to pamper the Albanian and other regiments that were stationed in Constantinople to protect his person, overawe the city, and preserve the Despotism; and he saw to it that these men duly received their pay, were well fed and properly clothed. But with this exception the military administration of the Empire was left wholly in the hands of the Palace favourites, who, with their characteristic greed and total lack of patriotic sentiment, enriched themselves at the expense of the national defence, and with a callous indifference to the sufferings of the men, practically starved the army.

In Turkey, the burden of obligatory service is placed exclusively on the Mussulman population, the Christians up till now having enjoyed complete exemption, in return for which they have paid a

small poll-tax. The Turkish soldier is among the toughest as well as the bravest in the world, and he will undergo great hardships uncomplainingly; but there are limits even to his endurance. It would be difficult to exaggerate the pitiable condition of these fine troops, as I have often seen them in provincial garrisons and posts in the days of the old *régime*. They never received their full rations; sometimes they were in a starving condition; they were ill-clothed even when guarding the frontier through the hard Balkan winters; often in rags and tatters, with what remained of their uniforms supplemented with such native garments as they could pick up; their small pay was always in arrears; they were untrained and undisciplined—a pitiful waste of the finest military material in Europe; and the officers themselves irregularly paid, slovenly, because they had no means to procure the decencies of life, and estranged one from the other by the hateful spy system, were in no condition to inspire their men with the high spirit and *esprit de corps* that used to distinguish the Turkish army. But despite all this, when fighting had to be done these men remembered that they were Turkish soldiers, and fought well.

The Turkish soldier might even have put up with all this during his four years of service with the colours, for it takes much to rouse him to mutiny; but his oppression took one form that

was intolerable to him and to his family: the iniquitous custom grew up of keeping him with the army for several years after his term of service had legally expired; and the reservists also, when called out for their periodical training, were not infrequently carried off to remote parts of the Empire and compelled to resume their military service for an indefinite time. The worst lot of all was that of regiments ordered to the Hedjaz or the Yemen. In those wild regions the wretched troops, ill-equipped, with wholly inadequate transport, and therefore always short of food, and generally provided with insufficient ammunition, had to carry on long campaigns against the rebel Arabs. They thus suffered great privations, and were not seldom defeated and massacred in consequence of the criminal negligence of Turkey's rulers. Educated surgeons were rarely attached to these expeditions, and I have been assured by old soldiers who had served in Arabia, that if a man was sick or wounded, so that he was unable to march, there was little chance for him; as there were no means for carrying him; and that in these circumstances the ignorant and ill-paid men who played the part of army doctors, after pretending to examine a man, would declare that he was in a dying condition, and had him buried in the sand while yet alive. It often happened, too, that soldiers

in Arabia, when they did get their discharge—probably because they were unfit for further service—were refused transport back to Turkey on the Government ships, and, being penniless, had to remain in that alien land until charitable people, of whom there are happily plenty among the Turks, came to their rescue. A friend of mine, who was recently British consul in a Turkish port, after careful investigation in his particular district, found that not more than twenty per cent. of the soldiers who were sent to the Yemen returned to their homes. Whenever conscripts were carried away for service in that dreaded land there were piteous scenes, and crowds of wailing women would come to the ship's side to bid a last farewell to the relatives whom they never expected to see again, and already mourned as dead.

Under this shocking system of military maladministration there was a great waste of Turkey's young manhood. The rate of mortality in the army was excessive, and this was one of the principal causes of the standstill in the numbers of this, the finest peasantry in Europe, as compared with the rapid increase of the exempted Christian population. These conscripts, when they were torn from their homes, often left behind them wives and families dependent on them, so the whole Mussulman people suffered greatly through

the vile treatment of the army, that was the best part of itself and in which every one had relatives; and at last it came about that even the faithful peasantry lost its loyalty, and, like the Moslems of the higher classes, was ready to rise and sweep away the intolerable Despotism.

CHAPTER V

Nationalism in the East—Influence of Western ideas in Turkey—Turkish literature—The modernist movement in Turkey—Pan-Islamism—The awakening of Islam—The spread of education.

For the last few years—that is, ever since the victorious war waged by Japan against Russia demonstrated to the peoples of the East that an Oriental country could break away from the conservative traditions that oppose progress, and make itself respected as one of the great civilised powers of the world—a remarkable growth of nationalism throughout Asia has attracted the close attention of observers in Europe. The East that gave the West its early civilisation is now taking its political ideals from the West. In India, China, Persia and Egypt national parties have risen whose aim it is to free their countries either from native despotism or from European tutelage, and to introduce forms of self-government modelled on those of modern Europe. But though much has been written and said concerning the awakening of the populations of the abovementioned countries, it is curious that there was no talk of any political movement in Turkey, the

nearest to us of the Eastern nations, until last July, when the world was suddenly amazed to learn that what appeared to be an unpremeditated military mutiny in Macedonia had compelled the Sultan to grant a Constitution to his country.

This Moslem revolution, that had been so long preparing and was so well organised, came as a complete surprise even to such European residents as knew the country best, including the Ambassadors of the Powers in Constantinople and their Consular representatives throughout the Empire. None of these gave any warning to their respective Governments, of what was coming. None of the newspaper correspondents in Turkey, none of the globe-trotting M.P.s and members of the Balkan Committee who were seeking an understanding of Turkish affairs on the spot, had any inkling of the wide-spread conspiracy that was to upset the Despotism with its first blow. It had been long known, of course, that there existed a group of exiled politicians who called themselves the "Young Turkish Party." But this party was not taken seriously, for its critics little knew that it represented all that was intelligent and enlightened in Turkey. It was regarded as a little band of mad anarchists, or at best of foolish visionaries. An ambassador described the movement as "innocuous," while some regarded it as "bogus," and denied even the virtue of sincerity to these patriots. It was written of them in an

authoritative work that, "a large proportion of them had gone into an exile with the express object of being persuaded to return," that is, of being reclaimed by the Sultan's bribes. An Englishman who has lived all his life in Turkey thus summed up his opinion: "The Young Turkey association—lacking, as it does, pecuniary resources, cohesion, definite purpose and capable leaders, has not shown itself a formidable organisation." Our humanitarian agitators had a complete misapprehension of the aim of the movement, and were apparently convinced that no good thing could come from the modern Turks. But the Young Turks all the while knew what they were about, what they wanted, and how to set to work to get it; and the organisation that for years was preparing the revolution, worked so secretly as to conceal the importance of the movement from the Palace spies themselves.

No great political movement can be of sudden growth if it is going to meet with permanent success, and though the ultimate explosion may take by surprise those outside the movement, the revolution of a serious people is the result of long brooding and gradual development of opinion. From the time of the Sultan Mahmud II, who ascended the throne one hundred years ago, the better and more patriotic statesmen of Turkey have made efforts to bring the system of government into accord with the methods of advancing

Europe. The influence of Western ideas made themselves felt throughout European Turkey, and began to modify the intellectual outlook, the ideals and the social customs of the educated classes. The change, as I have pointed out in a previous chapter, was reflected in Turkish literature, which about forty years ago became Western in sentiment and style, and the literary language itself was modernised by a group of writers of whom Kemal Bey, historian, poet, philosopher, dramatist and novelist, was pre-eminent, a genius whose works, published in Europe, were not allowed to enter Turkey during the Hamidian *régime*, but whose splendid war hymn, the "Silistria," the penalty for singing which was death before last July, now has the same stirring effect upon the revolutionary Moslem crowds as had the "Marseillaise" upon the French. As the facilities for education, the schools and colleges, multiplied in Turkey, the thirst for scientific knowledge and the culture of Western Europe spread through the country, and with enlightenment and education naturally came the liberalism of the West and intellectual revolt against the paralysing influence of some time-honoured institutions and doctrines.

It is scarcely accurate in these days to speak of the Turks—as one often hears them spoken of—as the finest of *Oriental* races. The Turks have been five hundred years in Europe, during which

they have intermarried largely with Europeans, and they are now to all intents and purposes Europeans, more so, indeed, than some of their neighbours on this continent, a fact which would be more generally recognised were it not for the barrier raised between them and ourselves by the difference of religion. Thus it has come about that the modernist movement in Turkey is much more in touch with Western ideas than is that of the other awakening peoples of the East, who differ so much from ourselves in race and character, and whose awakening has to a large extent taken the form of antagonism to European influence and a desire to free themselves from the European hegemony. On the other hand, the Turkish reformers wish to attach the Turkish race to Europe and not to Asia; their sympathies and culture are now Western and not Eastern; they wish Turkey to be recognised as one of the civilised countries of Europe.

It is partly on this account, too, that the Young Turks have repudiated Pan-Islamism, the form which the modern awakening of the Moslem nationalities has taken in some parts of the Eastern world—that combination of Mohammedans of all races to resist the Christian nations, of which, as I have explained, Abdul Hamid himself was an advocate. It was a movement which, if successful, might have restored to Islam its glory and its conquering might, but it would have

brought with it the recrudescence of religious fanaticism and the impossibility of progress on modern lines.

The views of the Young Turkey party on this subject were thus expressed by one of their organs: "We Ottomans belong to a race sufficiently intelligent and practical to understand that the pursuit of the Pan-Islamic designs of the visionaries would be contrary to our dearest interests." The Young Turk is a patriot whose first thought is for his own fatherland; he is working for its liberation and its progress, and hopes to make it again strong and respected of the nations. But Pan-Islamism he leaves alone, and it will be remembered that the Turkish Constitutional party gave no encouragement to the Egyptian Nationalists, whose aspirations have a Pan-Islamic character.

On the other hand, the Young Turks have made it clear that theirs is not an irreligious movement, and that Moslem fanatics cannot with justice accuse them of holding the rationalistic views of the French revolutionaries, and of being bad Mussulmans. Writers have described this as a party of agnostics. This is an incorrect statement, and were it believed by the Turkish people the Constitution would have but a short life. There are, of course, some Young Turks who, during their exile in Paris and other European cities, have acquired rationalistic views; but

the great bulk of them are faithful Moslems. We have at times had agnostics in our own Parliament, but it would not be fair on that account to dub England a nation of unbelievers. The Young Turkish movement, indeed, far from being irreligious, is tempered with the faith of Islam; but, as a French writer recently put it, with these reformers Islamism is a motive and not an end.

But the Mohammedanism of the enlightened Turks who compose the Young Turk party is a very different thing to the fanatical and narrow creed of the Arab; for it is wholly and sincerely tolerant. There has been an awakening of the religion of Islam itself, and it is now being proved to an astonished world that the ancient dogmas of Mohammedanism are no more immutable than those of other creeds. Even as the Christianity of the Middle Ages, which burnt heretics and regarded science as the invention of the Devil, has adapted itself to modern ideas, so at last has it come to pass with the supposed unchangeable doctrines of the Moslem Church. Enlightened Mussulmans are doing their best to bring their religion into conformity with modern ideas and the progress of an enfranchised people. In India, Persia and Turkey learned doctors of the sacred law are showing that many accepted doctrines are not enjoined by the Koran itself, but have been grafted on the religion by various

commentators ; and therefore, even as the Reformation in Europe rejected much that had been superimposed on primitive Christianity and went straight back to the Bible, so does the present Moslem reformation reject many of the commentaries and go straight back to the Koran, bringing new interpretations to bear upon the Book itself, with the result that the doctors have been able to prove that the strictest Mussulman can reconcile it with his conscience to accept the Constitution, that Islam is essentially liberal and democratic, that to remove oppression and corruption is to obey the teachings of the Koran, and that the granting of equal rights to Christians and Mussulmans—a reform which was the stumbling-block to many Mohammedans—is in no wise opposed to the injunctions of the Prophet.

The Young Turk movement is therefore Nationalist and not Pan-Islamic, and the policy of these reformers is opportunist. Liberal-minded themselves, they have had to bear in mind that Turkey-in-Asia holds some of the most conservative and fanatical Moslems in the world ; so they had to go delicately to work when they began necessarily to interfere with some cherished traditions. The exile of these young men afforded them the opportunity of getting into contact with educated Indian and other Mussulmans, learned in Moslem law, from whom they received considerable assistance. It will be

remembered that the Sheikh-ul-Islam, as representative of the *mollahs* and the interpreters of the Koran in Turkey, gave the Young Turk movement the sanction of the faith, rebuked the fanatics who had preached against reform as being irreligious, and compelled them to stay their mischievous vapourings. Had it not been for this support the revolution would have been impossible. But it may not be generally known that the theological arguments which convinced the Sheikh-ul-Islam that this was the right attitude to take were drawn up for him by a faithful subject of Edward VII, Ameer Ali, ex-judge of the High Court in India, and a learned exponent of Moslem thought and tradition. It was Ameer Ali who recently introduced the deputations of Indians that waited on Lord Morley to plead the cause of the Moslems in India who, by the scheme proposed by the Government, were not to be given due representation on the Councils.

The awakening of Turkey, the growth of liberalism and the thirst for knowledge among the educated Turks, including even the *Ulemas*, whom the world regarded as the most narrow-minded of Mussulman conservatives, were largely encouraged by the very measures which Abdul Hamid had taken to suppress these ideas and movements so dangerous to his despotism. Men of ability, being suspected by the Palace, and

living in perpetual dread of the espionage which enveloped them like some hideous nightmare, were unable to associate with each other freely, and had to live isolated lives, the tedium of which they relieved by reading, with a greater avidity than is displayed in other countries, where men have wider scope for their intellectual energies, works on history, philosophy and law, and other literature which were smuggled into Turkey across her land and sea frontiers. In latter days the Turkish exiles in Europe succeeded in pouring prohibited literature wholesale into Turkey, but at first the supply was small; one book, passed secretly from one man to another, would be read by hundreds, and young men greedy for instruction even went to the pains of copying out with their own hands bulky volumes which they had borrowed. Many an Englishman who considers himself to be well read would feel ashamed on discovering how much wider than his own is the knowledge of English literature possessed by some of his friends among the Young Turks. The Sultan, too, unintentionally, spread far and wide the very influences which it was his desire to destroy, for by driving thousands of educated men out of Constantinople into exile in various provinces of his Empire, he made of these missionaries of enlightenment, liberalism, and political discontent. Those also who were exiled to foreign countries and lived in Paris and other

Western capitals came under the immediate influence of modern ideas, and, communicating with their friends in Turkey, inoculated them with their own views. Thus it came about that the whole Empire was gradually leavened with dissatisfaction with the Sultan's rule, and the ground was prepared for the revolution.

CHAPTER VI

The genesis of the Young Turkey party—Feeling in Northern Albania—The Turkish exiles in Geneva—The Young Turk organisation in Paris—Propaganda in Turkey—The Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress—Ahmed Riza Bey—The Armenians join the cause—The Paris Congresses of 1902 and 1907.

It is about forty years ago that one first heard of a Young Turk party. Abd-ul-Aziz, having broken the early promises of his reign, had made himself the absolute despot, and had crushed the liberalism that from the time of Mahmud II had been gaining ground in Turkey. A number of educated men then fled from the country to Paris and London, and, calling themselves the "Young Turks," started a movement whose object it was to agitate for the introduction of reforms into the government of their native land. Among them were men of great ability, including the illustrious Kemal Bey; and all the Turkish literature of that period that had any value was produced by this group of "intellectuals." They published a paper called the *Hurriet*, which is the Turkish word for liberty, in which they exposed in an unsparing fashion the corruption, incapacity and lack of patriotism of the high officials and advisers of the

Sultan. The outspoken *Hurriet* alarmed the Palace, and was of course placed on the black list; but was smuggled into the country, exercised a great influence, and effected its purpose of spreading antagonism to the existing state of things.

Liberalism, as we have seen, waxed strong enough to have its way for a short period in Turkey. Abd-ul-Aziz was deposed, and Midhat Pasha and the patriotic statesmen who were his associates began to introduce their reforms. Many of the Young Turks returned from Europe to support the new Constitutional Government, some sitting in the short-lived Parliament which the present Sultan opened on his accession to the throne.

Those who loved Turkey thought that the day of her regeneration had dawned at last; but the disillusionment soon came, for Abdul Hamid, in the spring of 1878, dissolved the Parliament, suspended the Constitution, and commenced his ruthless persecution of liberalism. So the Young Turks were once again scattered over the face of the earth; some were imprisoned; some were exiled to distant provinces of the Empire; some escaped to Europe; and such as were allowed to remain in Turkey as free men, had to conduct themselves warily and shun politics, living as they did under the sleepless eyes of the ubiquitous espionage.

For about fifteen years after this date one heard nothing of the Young Turkey movement. If it existed it had little if any organisation, and had no power. To all appearances it had been stamped out effectually by the suppressive measures that had been taken by the Palace. One came across members of the scattered band in European cities, earning their living as teachers of languages and in other capacities, but these rarely spoke to foreigners of what was in their hearts, for they found few sympathisers with the sorrows of Turkey.

But though "Young Turkey" showed no signs of life it was not dead. In Constantinople and other big Turkish cities the visitor from Europe would never hear the movement spoken of; the word *hurriet* was, so to speak, expunged from the Turkish dictionary, and to have been heard uttering it would have brought denunciation as a traitor. But in far parts of the Empire tongues wagged more freely, and the memory of the reformers was kept green. In the autumn and winter of 1879 I was wandering over that wildest region of all Europe, Northern Albania, and there I found that men were speaking very plainly indeed; for the espionage system was not then fully organised, and at any rate it had not reached that lawless province, where the Government was helpless, and inspired neither respect or fear.

At the period of my visit, Albania, a country

which, as I shall show later, took a prominent part in the recent revolution, was in a state of positive anarchy—the gendarmerie on strike, the mutinous soldiers refusing to salute their officers, neither having received pay for months, while the natives held seditious meetings publicly and unmolested in the mosques of the garrison towns, in which rebellion against the Porte was fearlessly advocated. The army officers with whom I conversed despaired of their country, and those who had been in Constantinople said that the one hope for Turkey—an administration under the direction of men of Midhat Pasha's stamp—had been destroyed. The army doctors in Scutari—for the most part Armenians—were still more outspoken, and advocated the deposition and even killing of the Sultan. One of these doctors described the condition of the country to me in the following words: "You have no idea of what a corrupt, vile thing this Turkish Government is. The Court eats all the country. We who work, the *employés* of the State, the doctors, the soldiers, never receive any pay now. As long as they think they can obtain our labour for nothing, not a *para* will they let slip through their fingers. Look at my case. I have been a doctor in the Turkish army for forty years. I have been through the Crimean war, over all Asia, in the service of Turkey. I am entitled to a good

pension. I have been day after day to the offices at Constantinople, and put my case before the authorities. They put me off with all sorts of fair promises, but I knew what these meant, so went to them day after day, and worried them so much that they decided to get rid of me in some way. 'There is a permanent hospital in Scutari in Albania,' they told me. 'In consideration of your long service we appoint you as head doctor of it. Start at once to your post.' Now that I have travelled all this way, at my own expense, mind you, what do I find? The permanent hospital no longer exists—it is a myth, and they knew it in Constantinople all the time, and no doubt chuckled merrily, when I had turned my back, at the clever way they had rid themselves of the importunate old nuisance." Then he went on to speak of the sufferings of the troops, and assured me that, faithful and obedient as they were by nature and tradition, they would not put up with the vile treatment much longer, and that a military mutiny was brewing which would destroy the Despotism within a few months. In this opinion he was wrong, for thirty years had to roll by before the event which he predicted actually came to pass. He also spoke to me of men of the Young Turk party whom he met in Constantinople during the brief period of free institutions. He much admired their tolerance, and asked me whether I thought that the Young

Turk refugees in England, by explaining Turkey's trouble, would be able to persuade the British Government to champion the cause of Turkish liberty.

I discovered, too, that the fame of Midhat Pasha as an honest, just, and patriotic statesman, had spread throughout that wild country, and it is not to be wondered at that the Sultan, fearing him, brought about his destruction, and so made him the first martyr of the Young Turkey cause. The Mussulman Albanians themselves greatly revered Midhat, and regarded him as their possible saviour. They had at that time formed themselves into the organisation known as the Albanian League, whose object it was in the first place to resist by force of arms the handing over to Montenegro of the Albanian town and district of Gussinje, which, by the terms of the Treaty of Berlin, Turkey had ceded to the mountain Principality; and in the second place to throw off the yoke of the Sultan. The leaguesmen were then the masters of Albania. They decided on, and carried out, the murder in Jakova of Mehemet Ali, the General who had been sent by the Porte on the dangerous mission of negotiating this transfer of Turkish territories to her enemies, and about eight thousand of them, Albanians, Mussulman refugees from Bosnia, and deserters from the Turkish army, were holding Gussinje under the leadership of Ali Bey. Gussinje, by the way, still belongs to Turkey;

for the Great Powers who had given it to Montenegro were unable to enforce with the cannon of their warships the surrender of a place lying amid the mountains of the interior; so Montenegro ultimately had to content itself with another arrangement.

I crossed the mountains that lie between Scutari and Gussinje, and narrowly escaped having my head cut off as a Russian spy on one occasion; but I succeeded in seeing a good deal of the Albanian leaguesmen. In the course of conversation with one of their chiefs he spoke to me as follows: "The men who rule in Constantinople, what do they do for us? Tax us, rob us—that is all. And what do they give us in return for what they steal? Can they defend us, protect us? No! They have sold our lands to the Montenegrins and the Austrians. I tell you that we of the League have sworn that we will have the Turk no more. Albania shall have her independence and the Powers shall recognise us. If they do not, we care not. Leave us alone; that is enough for us." Then, turning suddenly to me, he asked, "What do you English think of Midhat Pasha?" I told him of the esteem in which Midhat was held by my countrymen; he seemed pleased on hearing this, and said, "The Turks will not have him, but we will. What we wish is to create an independent Albanian principality, with this good man Midhat Pasha as our prince."

I have described these experiences of mine in Albania to show how things were shaping in the outer provinces of Turkey thirty years ago, and how, though one heard nothing of the Young Turks in Europe, the seed they had sown had not fallen on barren ground; so that at last, when the time was ripe, the people of Turkey, remembering what their fathers had told them of the good Midhat, were ready to range themselves by the side of his disciples.

But from the year 1878, when the Constitution was suspended, until 1891, there appears to have been no Young Turk organisation, though the number of Turks who longed for deliverance from a detested *régime* was increasing by leaps and bounds. For centuries Geneva has been the safe asylum for men from other lands who have revolted against the tyranny of Church or Government, and there, in these days, is to be found an interesting little society of Russian anarchists, and all manner of malcontents and visionaries, who hatch their various plots, and when the demand arises manufacture the favourite weapon of anarchy, the bomb. It was in this fair city, in the year 1891, that a group of Turkish refugees and exiles formed themselves into the association that afterwards developed into the "Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress."

The time had indeed arrived for patriotic Turks to bestir themselves and come to the rescue

of their country; for it was about this date that the most critical period of her history opened, and that various happenings in her European and Asiatic provinces threatened the disruption of the Empire. In 1890 the persecuted Armenians commenced the agitation which later on the Sultan put down with wholesale massacres. In the early nineties, too, the Bulgarians in Macedonia initiated the conspiracy which, after various small risings, culminated in the rebellion of 1903; and here, as in Armenia, the Turkish irregulars suppressed insurrection with slaughter and rapine. Indignation was aroused in Europe, especially in England, and in 1903 the British Government urged the other Powers to join her in compelling the Porte to accept a scheme of reform under European supervision that should secure fair government and the security of Turkey's Christian subjects. But the jealousy of the Powers stood in the way of any genuine co-operation, while the policy of Turkey's two most powerful neighbours was to destroy the Ottoman Empire and not to reform it; so the British scheme was rejected; the measures that were taken by the Powers proved wholly inadequate; the anarchy in Macedonia ever grew worse; and that sooner or later foreign intervention of an effective and forcible character would be necessitated became evident.

Now the one essential part of the Young Turk

programme is the preservation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Opportunists in the rest of their policy, the Young Turks are determined that no more Ottoman territory shall be placed under foreign domination. They feel that foreign interference in Turkey's internal affairs means loss of national independence and the ultimate expulsion of the Turks from the European side of the Bosphorus. They entertain the strongest objection to the attempted settlement of the racial disputes in Macedonia by foreign Powers, and the chief article of their faith is that, for Turkey to hold her own in the world, her reforms must come from *within* and not from *without*. Therefore at this juncture, knowing that they had the educated classes in Turkey in sympathy with them, and that oppression had made the masses discontented, these Turkish patriots in Geneva decided to create an organisation whose object it would be to bring pressure to bear upon the Turkish Government, and move the Sultan to sanction the much-needed reforms. At this early stage they did not feel sufficiently strong to plan the deposition of the monarch should he prove obdurate, but they resolved to so arrange matters in Constantinople as to make it impossible, in the case of the death of that clever and masterly monarch, for his successor to rule on the same despotic lines.

The headquarters of the organisation was

moved from Geneva to Paris, and it had its branches in London and other capitals. Little heed was paid to the Young Turks by the peoples in whose midst they lived, and many regarded them as harmless dreamers. But the Sultan himself knew better; his Embassy in Paris was instructed to closely watch the organisation, and spies were sent from Constantinople whose business it was to report directly to the Palace all they could discover concerning the members. In Turkey itself active methods of suppression were taken, and the system of espionage became ever more unbearable, with the result that the enemies of the *régime* increased in number, and Turkey's best men fled the country to swell the band of conspirators in Paris.

Now that men can talk quite freely in Turkey, returning exiles tell strange and romantic tales of their adventures in those dark days. For a Turkish subject to leave Turkey without the permission of the inquisitorial Government was then a treasonable offence involving outlawry and the confiscation of property. As every outgoing steamer was closely watched by the police, it was no easy matter to escape from Constantinople by sea, and to do so by land was still more difficult. On several occasions distinguished Turks were assisted in their flight by their English friends. For example, with the connivance of one of our Consuls, a fugitive Pasha was concealed in the

Consulate, was disguised in a suit of slops such as sailormen wear, and when the opportunity arrived quietly walked away from the carefully watched Consulate in the company of an English merchant captain, satisfied the questioning police spies on the quay, and boarded the British vessel that was to carry him to safety; for he had been entered on the ship's books as cook, and was provided with the necessary consular document that testified to his having signed articles in that capacity. Oftentimes, too, some British steamer passing down the Bosphorus would stop her engines and, under cover of the darkness, send off the friendly boat that, by pre-arrangement, would take a party of fugitive Turks from off a lonely beach, and so save them from the oubliette or the strangler's cord.

The Palace employed terrorism in Turkey and corruption in Paris in its attempt to destroy the Young Turk association. By offers of rewards and high positions, some of the members were persuaded to desert the cause and to return to Turkey. Some were found base enough to serve as spies. Thus, one, whose name it is perhaps better not to mention, contrived to work himself into a prominent position on the Paris Committee, learnt its secrets, and returned to Constantinople to betray them to the Sultan. But the organisation ever grew stronger under persecution, and patriotic Turks supplied the funds which enabled

it to carry on its propaganda. The Paris Committee published a paper and numerous tracts, which exposed the iniquities of the Hamidian *régime* and called for the deposition of the Sultan, and these were smuggled into Turkey and were widely distributed and read, despite the vigilance of the ever-increasing army of spies. The agents of the Committee in Constantinople used to placard the city under cover of the night with revolutionary appeals, and seditious placards threatening the life of the Sultan were sometimes placed upon the walls of the Palace itself. Abdul Hamid, living in perpetual fear, redoubled his precautions.

In 1901 the Sultan, having been informed by his ambassador in Paris that the Paris Committee was preparing a great Young Turkey demonstration in Constantinople itself, was so anxious to intercept the correspondence that was passing between Paris and the members of the Young Turkey party in his capital that he violated his international agreements by seizing and breaking open the European mail-bags that were addressed to the various foreign post offices in Constantinople, and thereby provoked the Powers to threaten a joint naval demonstration, which was only warded off by a humble apology and further solemn promises on Abdul Hamid's part.

In Paris, the "Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress," to give the association the now world-famous name which it assumed a few years

ago, was ably directed by Ahmed Riza Bey, who, having worked with devotion for the cause through eighteen years of exile, returned to Turkey after the proclamation of the Constitution last year, and is now the President, or Speaker, of the Turkish Chamber of Deputies. The Committee was also strengthened during the last few years of the Hamidian *régime* by the admission to it of several distinguished Turks of high rank, who fled from Constantinople to Paris so as to be able to assist the national movement from that safe vantage-ground. Among these fugitives was the Sultan's relative, Prince Sabah-ed-din, who threw himself heart and soul into the revolutionary movement, and advocated a policy more advanced and radical than that favoured by the large majority of the Young Turks, whose Liberalism is full-blooded Toryism when compared to what passes for Liberalism in England in these latter days. Prince Sabah-ed-din is an advanced home ruler, and he is the virtual leader of the "Liberal Union" party, which is working for a degree of centralisation that is regarded as dangerous by most Mussulmans, but is naturally pleasing to the Greeks.

But though these Turkish gentlemen, with their clever conversation and their charming manners, were welcomed in Paris *salons* and London drawing-rooms, few people in Europe realised that the Young Turkey movement had the remotest chance

of attaining its ends; for it was a silent movement, and while the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Armenians voiced their grievances with a persistence that gained for them a wide hearing and much sympathy, the patriotic Turks, unwilling to invoke the help of foreigners, took no steps to make their aspirations known in Europe. Ahmed Riza did, indeed, come over to London in 1904, and, for the first time in his life, addressed a meeting of Englishmen, but it was not to crave sympathy for the Mussulman Turks whom he represented, but to express the sentiments of his party regarding foreign intervention in Turkey, whether it were that of a Government or of the English humanitarian committees. In the course of his speech Ahmed Bey, while admitting the justice of a revolt against despotism, condemned the European friends of Armenia and Macedonia for wrongfully and artificially inciting a rising, and so playing the part of the Pan-Slavist agents, and he practically put it that by fomenting insurrection among the Christian populations in Turkey they were more or less responsible for the massacres which followed. The meeting, to quote from the official report, "became extremely agitated, and many interruptions were addressed to the speaker." The speakers who followed had some unkind things to say concerning Ahmed Riza and the Young Turks. Here is a quotation from the speech of an influential humanitarian who was

present. "I am not sorry that the gentleman has spoken, because it shows us how impossible it is to expect any reforms in Turkey from the Young Turkish party. They are only thinking of themselves. The liberties of the Christians would be just as unsafe under a Sultan with the sentiments of the gentleman who has just sat down, as under the present Sultan."

And yet, even at that time, Ahmed Riza and his Mussulman associates were planning a scheme which was intended to bring liberty, justice, and security to the oppressed Christian subjects of the Porte, and was, moreover, destined to prove successful where all the diplomacy of the Powers and the too often misdirected efforts of the humanitarians in Europe had signally failed. For the Young Turks, like their great forerunner, Midhat Pasha, realised that Turkey could only be saved from disintegration by placing all her races and creeds on an equality, by giving the same rights to all. They therefore set themselves to bring about a co-operation of the various elements of the Turkish population, and to make common cause with the Armenian, Bulgarian, and other revolutionary non-Mussulman committees in Paris.

It appeared, to those who heard of it, as being the most chimerical of schemes; for the Young Turks and their proposed allies had but one aspiration in common—the overthrow of the

Despotism. Their ideals seemed indeed to be irreconcilable. The Young Turks above all things desired the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and a union of her peoples that would make the Empire strong. On the other hand, the non-Mussulman revolutionaries cared nothing for the integrity of the Empire. For the most part they desired not to reform Turkey, but to break her up. Neither did they seek union among themselves; for the different Christian races hated each other, and cherished mutually incompatible ambitions. Thus, Bulgarians, Greeks, and Serbs in Macedonia dreamt of the formation of autonomous States, or of annexations to Bulgaria, Greece, and Servia, respectively. There was to be found, too, in some of the non-Mussulman committees, a considerable leavening of anarchical and socialistic ideas with which the conservative Turkish reformers could have no sympathy. Out of elements so incongruous, and in many respects antagonistic, it would seem impossible to effect any sort of co-operation.

But the Young Turks were terribly in earnest, and were patient and persuasive; they compelled the leaders of the non-Mussulman committees to listen to their arguments, and they sent delegates to their meetings; but it was, of course, not for a long time that they could come to an understanding with men who found it difficult to believe that

any form of Turkish rule could deal fairly with Christians and Jews. At last, wonderful to say, the Young Turks in Paris, being honest patriots, succeeded in convincing the other groups of their sincerity when they put forward the full equality in the eyes of the law of all races and creeds in Turkey as an essential portion of their programme.

The Armenian committees were the first to fall in line with the Young Turkey movement, and the union between them that was arranged in Paris, in 1903, has been faithfully observed by both parties. It will be remembered how the two races fraternised after the declaration of the Constitution, how the world was amazed by the spectacle of Armenian and Moslem clergymen walking arm in arm in processions, and how loyally the Turks and Armenians worked together during the Parliamentary elections. It was, indeed, a natural alliance; there has never been real enmity between the two races until the present Sultan's reign. The Armenian massacres were not the work of Turks but of savage Kurds, instigated by the Palace Camarilla. "Few incidents in history are more touching," writes a Turkish subject in the *Nineteenth Century*, "than the visit paid by a large assembly of Turks (in August last) to the Armenian cemetery in Constantinople, in order to deposit floral tributes on the graves of the victims of the massacre of 1894,

and to have prayers recited, by a priest of their own persuasion, over the butchered dead."

Moreover, there were few political difficulties in the way of an understanding between the Young Turks and the Armenian revolutionaries. The problem was not like that of the Greeks and Slavs in Macedonia, who had on the frontier independent nations of people of their own kin on whom to lean and to whom to look for protection and perchance annexation. For Armenia is now but a geographical expression, and ancient Armenia has been partitioned between Turkey, Russia, and Persia. The Armenians in Turkish Armenia are vastly outnumbered by the Moslem population; and the creation of an independent Armenian principality, desired by a section of the revolutionists, was obviously an impracticable scheme. The more sensible Armenians realised that the only alternative for the rule of Turkey was that of Russia, and the experience of their brethren across the border had proved to them that, of the two, the rule of Turkey was to be preferred; for under it they enjoyed a measure of racial autonomy and various privileges—much restricted, it is true, under Abdul Hamid's despotism—which the Russian Government, ever bent on the Russianisation of the nationalities subject to it, would certainly have denied to them.

It was, therefore, the aim of the moderates

among the Armenian malcontents, while remaining under Ottoman rule, to secure the civil liberties and institutions calculated to guarantee their personal safety, the security of their property, and the honour of their wives and daughters. Now the Young Turk programme promised them these things and more; so, realising that this great Mussulman movement was likely to meet with success, they decided to throw in their lot with Ahmed Riza and his brother revolutionaries.

But this union could not be accomplished until the Armenians had consented to abandon the methods of their propaganda. They had for years been appealing to the European Powers, through their Committees, to compel the Sultan to grant good government to his Christian subjects in Armenia in accordance with the solemn pledges which he had given to the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin. But the Young Turks insisted that there must be no appealing to foreign Powers for assistance, that the Armenians henceforth would have to rely upon the support of their Mussulman fellow-subjects alone, that they must now cease from such agitation as might invite further massacres, and await the outbreak of the revolution that was to deliver all the races that were oppressed by the Despotism.

It may have been noticed that from the date of this understanding, in 1903, one heard very little

about trouble in Armenia; the violence of the Armenian propaganda was restrained by the leaders so that the Young Turk movement might not be embarrassed, and the attention of Europe was now turned to the state of anarchy in Macedonia. The Young Turks always worked in secret, but when policy demanded it they sometimes came out into the open. Thus it was that Ahmed Riza went to London in 1904, shortly after the union between his party and the Armenian Committees, and, in the speech from which I have quoted, protested at a public meeting against the interference of English humanitarians in the affairs of Armenia. He also seems to have influenced those who governed the policy of the Anglo-Armenian Association and to have won their confidence in his judgment, for it was at about this time that the active propaganda of this organisation suddenly came to a stop.

But Ahmed Riza and his associates, though they were working diligently to prepare the ground for the coming revolution by sending emissaries to inoculate the young army officers in Turkey with their views, and the Moslem clergy with interpretations of the Koran that breathed the spirit of reform and tolerance, kept their doings secret even from their friends. The revolution, so carefully planned, came as a complete surprise even to those Englishmen who had come in touch with the Turkish reformers in Paris and sympa-

thised with the aspirations of those intensely patriotic men who shunned politics, declined interviews with the Press, and lived most frugal lives, while they devoted themselves with single-minded zeal to the cause. I may mention that since 1904 the officials of the Eastern Questions Association (which, I believe, has always held the view that a strong and independent Turkey is an essential factor in the polity of nations) have been on friendly terms with Ahmed Riza Bey, visited him in Paris, become strong supporters of the Young Turk party, and have vigorously denounced the crooked policy of Russia and Austria in Macedonia.

The Young Turks thus came to an understanding with the Armenians, and later on it was arranged between them that when the time was ripe, and the Committee gave the word for the Mussulman revolt in Turkey, the Armenians should also rise; for it was realised that the Sultan would yield to nothing but force, and that only by means of an armed rebellion, and that possibly a very bloody one, could the liberators of Turkey effect their end.

And now the Young Turks set themselves to win over to their cause the other non-Mussulman revolutionary Committees. With the Jews, as with the Armenians, they had relatively little difficulty, for the Jews were a people without a land, and therefore could entertain no schemes of

national independence; their hope and interests lay in the good government of the Ottoman Empire. But with the Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbs of Macedonia, whose very last idea it was to become patriotic Ottomans, the Young Turks found the work of persuasion attended with almost insuperable difficulties.

To these revolutionaries other forms of argument had to be applied. It was pointed out to them that, unassisted from outside, they could not hope to conquer their independence with the sword from the armies of the Sultan; that the mutually-jealous Great Powers, if they did intervene in Macedonia, were not in the least likely to favour the political aspirations of the Christian populations; that to appeal to foreign intervention was a very dangerous thing; and that the annexation of the greater part of Macedonia to Austria-Hungary—in detestation of which Power all these Balkan races are united—might be the result of the state of anarchy in that region for which the revolutionary bands were responsible; in short, that it would be to the advantage of the Macedonian Christians to abandon their ideas of separation from the Ottoman Empire and to join cause with the Young Turks, whose aim it was to hold the Empire together and to give equal rights to all its peoples.

Wonderful to say, the Macedonian Committees in Paris at last allowed themselves to be persuaded,

and threw in their lot with the Young Turks, half-heartedly, perhaps, at first, and with mental reservations. They realised that they could hope for little help from Europe, and were willing to work with the Young Turks in upsetting the Hamidian *régime*. After a successful revolution something might turn up that would enable them to gain the national independence that they still had at heart; and even if that hope was destroyed, they would be able, having supported the Young Turks, to claim the equal rights which these had promised to them. But the conflict of interests that severed the various groups, and the anarchical principles that some of the revolutionary leaders professed, made the reconciliation of all these discordant elements a matter of great difficulty. The Congress held in Paris in 1902 had for its chief result the accentuation of schism; it was not till 1907 that the various Committees were able at last to arrange a programme that was acceptable to all; and by that time the Young Turks had established their secret society in Macedonia and had gained the allegiance of a considerable portion of that formidable Turkish army without whose co-operation, as the Christians in Macedonia knew well, no revolution had a chance of success.

So in December 1907 a Congress of the Turkish revolutionaries met in Paris, at which were represented the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress, the Armenian, Bulgarian,

Jewish, Arab, Albanian and other Committees; and the delegates all agreed to accept the following principles:—The deposition of the Sultan Abdul Hamid. The maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Absolute equality in the eyes of the law of the various races and religions. The establishment of Parliamentary institutions on the lines of Midhat Pasha's Constitution.

The "Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress," as representing the dominant race and the fighting forces of the revolution, naturally now took the lead, and its members, of whom but a few were non-Mussulmans, became the organisers of the revolt and mandatories of the other Committees. It may be pointed out here that the resolutions of the Congress had no effect in pacifying Macedonia, where, indeed, the condition of affairs was ever becoming worse; for Greece and Bulgaria, still looking forward to the disruption of Turkey, were pouring into Macedonia their armed bands to "peg out claims" in the Greek and Bulgarian interest; and throughout all that region violence, murder and rapine prevailed. Of no more effect were the efforts of the great Powers, which, in 1907, issued a categorical declaration that no Macedonian race would be permitted to draw any territorial advantage from the action of its bands.

CHAPTER VII

The revolutionary party make Macedonia their base—Dread of foreign intervention—Discontent in the army—Racial strife in Macedonia—Greeks and exarchists—Salonica is chosen as the headquarters of the secret society—Freemasonry in Salonica.

IN 1906 the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress, considering that the time had come to transfer their organisation to the soil of Turkey itself, and there make the final preparations for their attack on the Despotism, selected Macedonia as the scene of their initial operations.

There were good reasons for choosing this portion of Turkey as their strategic base. In the first place, it was here that the forces were chiefly at work which were threatening the speedy dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, and the Young Turks realised that unless they quickly came to the rescue it would be too late, and Macedonia would be lost. The terrible condition of the country, overrun as it was by murderous bands of political brigands supported by Turkey's enemies, had already drawn an interference in the internal affairs of Macedonia on the part of the Great Powers that was deeply humiliating to every patriotic Turk. The Powers had compelled

the Sultan, by threat of force, to consent to the supervision of the civil administration of Macedonia by an international financial commission, and to the formation of an international gendarmerie trained and commanded by foreign officers —of whom, by the way, the English officers have undoubtedly been the most successful, as they are more in sympathy than the others with the nature of the Turkish soldier. But the patriotic Turks, though they often entertained personal affection for the European officers who were thus thrust upon them, loathed this foreign interference, and nourished a bitter resentment against the Hamidian *régime*, whose inept rule had brought this indignity upon Turkey and made the world regard the Ottomans as a fallen people no longer capable of managing their own affairs.

There was one feature of this foreign intervention which was especially disagreeable and alarming to the Young Turks. The reforms proposed by England, a disinterested country, had been rejected by the Powers, and a mandate had been given to Russia and Austria—regarded by the Turks as their most treacherous enemies —to introduce their own programme of reform (the Murzteg programme) into Macedonia. The Turks maintained, as, too, did independent observers, that these two Powers of a purpose made this programme a wholly ineffective one, and that their representatives were so working

AHMED RIZA BEY. For many years the principal Organiser of the Young Turk Party in Paris. He was elected President of the Chamber of Deputies when the Turkish Parliament opened in December, 1908.



as to foment disorder and strife among the Christian populations in order to forward the schemes for the dismemberment of European Turkey.

The signs of this foreign intervention everywhere around them served as object lessons to the people in Macedonia, whether educated men or peasants, civilians or soldiers, and they realised that, unless the methods of Turkish government improved, the foreign hold on the country would be ever tightened until its independence was destroyed. Thus there spread throughout Macedonia a profound discontent with the existing order of things, that prepared the ground for the great conspiracy.

To win over the Army to their side was of course the first object of the Young Turks, and therefore Macedonia was well chosen as the field of the early operations, inasmuch as the troops there were in a more disaffected condition than those in any other part of the Empire, and were ripe for revolt. For years these troops—ill clad, ill fed, and rarely paid—had been engaged in a desultory guerilla war against the bands of the Christian insurgents—a form of police work that brought no glory and was uncongenial to soldiers, while, by scattering them over the country in small sections, it did away with the cohesion and *esprit de corps* essential to an army. Their discontent was also aroused by seeing by the

side of them their brothers of the smart international gendarmerie, men with military pride and bearing, well disciplined and (for the Powers saw to this) well clothed and fed, and regularly paid. It hurt the self-respect of both officers and men in the regular army to contrast the condition of these men with that of their ragged selves, for which, as they well knew, the corrupt administration of the Palace gang was to blame.

Of the intolerable military spy system and the other causes of disaffection among the officers of the Ottoman forces I have already spoken. The young officers of the Macedonia army, men of education and open minded, who had passed through the military academies and had received instruction from foreign teachers, had exceptional opportunities in Macedonia for observing how an infamous rule was hurrying their country to its ruin, and therefore their sympathies naturally inclined towards the Young Turkey movement. Moreover, special grievances of their own aggravated their detestation of the Hamidian *régime;* the spy system was more searching and oppressive than elsewhere in this suspected portion of the Ottoman army, and it had become the habit of the Palace—galling to those who suffered under it—to send from the capital sleek Court favourites, with nothing of the soldier in them, to assume commands over the heads of fine officers who had taken a distinguished part in

Turkey's wars, and had been fighting the insurgent bands for years in the Macedonian mountains, but had never obtained the promotion that was their due.

Moreover, it favoured the plan of the revolutionaries that this vantage ground of Macedonia was at a safe distance from the capital—from the Palace with its myriad eyes and its regiments of well-fed, well-equipped, well-paid troops who could be counted upon to remain loyal to the despotism.

So far as the Mussulman population and the army were concerned, Macedonia was therefore ripe for rebellion, and the Christian peasantry, weary of the slaughter and devastation which the bands for years had been inflicting on the wretched country, were ready to welcome any new order of things that promised to bring peace and security.

To understand the operations of the secret society that organised the insurrection in Macedonia, it is necessary to bear in mind the condition of the country at that time. The Christian peasantry in Macedonia had suffered terribly from the pitiless methods employed by the Turks in suppressing any signs of insurrection, but during the latter years of the Hamidian *régime* they had to suffer even worse things, in consequence of the cruel internecine war which they waged among themselves. The various races

that make up the population of Macedonia had for long been carrying on their several national propaganda. The three independent States on Macedonia's borders, Greece, Bulgaria and Servia, were working with the Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs under Turkish rule, with a view to territorial expansion in this region, so soon as the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, to which they looked forward with confidence, should come to pass. But in Macedonia there are no extensive districts exclusively inhabited by Greeks, Bulgarians or Serbs. The different races are intermingled, and it is not unusual to find Mussulman Turks and Christians of each of three races living side by side in the same village. Consequently, as each of the three States above mentioned aspired to the reversion of all territory occupied by people of its own race, there was nearly everywhere an overlapping of claims; and it became the policy of each State to gain influence in a coveted district and there secure the numerical superiority of people of its own race, so as to be able to establish a strong title to possession when the Powers should undertake the dismemberment of Turkey.

This racial rivalry was embitted by religious fanaticism. Formerly the Greek Orthodox Church exercised an exclusive influence over the Bulgarian as well as Greek population of Macedonia, and all recognised the Patriarch as their

spiritual head. The Bulgarians resented the tyrannical ecclesiastical ascendency of the Greeks, and a schism arose which was deliberately widened by the Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz, who conceded to the Bulgarians the right to separate from the Greek Church and appoint an Exarch of their own. The Patriarch excommunicated the first Exarch and all who gave their allegiance to him, and since then there has been bitter hatred between the Orthodox and the schismatics. Of the Bulgarians in Macedonia, some have remained faithful to the Orthodox Church, while the majority acknowledge the spiritual headship of the Exarch. Now in Turkey populations are reckoned according to creed and not race, and in the census returns a Bulgarian who was a member of the Orthodox Greek Church would appear as a Greek. Therefore, for political, as well as religious, reasons the Greeks and Bulgarians strove hard to snatch from each other the control of the schools and churches in any district where there was a Bulgarian population, and employed violence and every form of persecution to secure converts.

In Greece, Bulgaria and Servia, armed bands were equipped and sent into Macedonia to forward the rival interests of these land-lustful States. Bulgarian bands burnt Greek villages and Greeks bands those of the Bulgarians. The seizure of each other's churches and ecclesiastical

property, and the murder of priests, became features of the propaganda. In the zeal to bring about the preponderance of this or that race the armed ruffians murdered women and children, and all the barbarities which aroused the indignation of Europe when Turkish irregulars were the guilty, were now committed against each other by the Christian *protégés* of our humanitarians. With fire and sword the several propaganda were spread through the country. The Greeks boycotted the Bulgarians in the towns, and by various methods of persecution endeavoured to drive Bulgarians from coveted districts on the sea coast. The Greek bishops and clergy worked with fanatical activity; not only did they forbid their co-religionists to give employment to Bulgarians, but they were largely responsible for the atrocities committed by the Greek bands, and went so far as to draw up proscription lists of Bulgarian schismatics who had to be assassinated; but the Bulgarians often had their revenge, as when, about a year ago, they dragged a Greek clergyman out of his church and burnt him alive.

Out of the many stories which one could tell, here is one which will serve as an example of the methods of the bands. On November 26, 1907, a Greek band of over sixty men surrounded the village of Zelenitchi, while a party broke into the house of the Bulgarian, Stoyan Gateff, where

a marriage was being celebrated, killed thirteen men, women and children, and wounded others.

To add to all this orgie of bloodshed, robbery and violence, came the formation of bands of Mussulman Turks, endowed with the bravery of their race, who, while protecting the Turkish peasantry against the Christians, pillaged and burnt the villages of the latter, and did their share of the killing; while the bodies of half famished, unpaid Turkish troops who were sent to search for concealed arms over the countryside naturally lived on the wretched Christian peasants, and helped themselves to all they needed.

Between the Greeks and Bulgarians there was never a truce save in winter, when the snow lay deep upon the Balkans, but sometimes the Serb would join the Greek bands in their attacks on the Bulgarians. Thus organised brigandage terrorised the countryside, and the bands, when they ran short of money or supplies, did not hesitate to rob even the people of their own kin, whose cause they were espousing, levying black-mail upon them, and burning their villages if demands were not satisfied. It is not to be wondered at that a large proportion of the Christian population found the succour of their ferocious brethren somewhat irksome, and were ready to welcome the pacific programme of the Young Turks. It will be remembered that when Bulgaria declared her independence last year the

Bulgarian peasants in Macedonia held meetings at which they denounced the Principality and sent a memorial to Prince Ferdinand to warn him that they would hold him responsible for whatever evil might now befall them, as the result of his action.

Of all these Christian propagandists the Bulgarians aroused most sympathy in Europe; for they are a brave and straightforward people. They had good reason to hate the Greeks, who had always persecuted them. When, in 1903, the Bulgarian exarchists in Macedonia, with their hundreds of small armed bands, carried on a gallant but hopeless guerilla war against the Turkish regular troops, the Greek Macedonians remained neutral, but worked against their fellow-Christians after a fashion characteristically Hellenic; they assisted the Turks by betraying and denouncing to them the Bulgarian rebels; for in their zeal to forward their ultimate political designs they were not ill pleased to witness the extermination by the Turks of their fellow-Christians who repudiated the Patriarch and refused to become Hellenised. It was not until 1904 that Greek bands, led by officers of the Greek regular army, crossed the frontier into Macedonia to wage war not only against the propaganda of the Bulgarian exarchists, but also that of the Wallach inhabitants, who desired to throw off the tyrannical supremacy of the Greek Patriarch and have an Exarch of their own, as

the Bulgarians had, with their own schools and churches in which their national language could be used. The Sultan, who was ever playing one Christian sect off against another, and made no real effort to stop the fratricidal strife that served his designs, now gave his encouragement to the Wallach propaganda, for this did not threaten the integrity of his Empire as did the propaganda of the Greeks and Serbs, there being no question of annexation of any Wallach districts of Macedonia to the distant kingdom of the Wallachs' kin, Roumania.

The Bulgarians proved themselves the braver men in this racial struggle; but the Greek bands were the strongest in numbers and were also the best equipped, for they were always kept well supplied with ammunition and food by the rich merchants in Athens. The Greek bands chiefly distinguished themselves by attacking unprotected villages and slaughtering unarmed peasants; half-a-dozen brave Turkish gendarmes have on occasion sufficed to rout the largest of these bands. I need not say that the unfortunate Turkish peasants, being regarded as enemies by all parties, suffered severely at the hands of the propagandists.

The condition of the country ever got worse. In 1907 there were one hundred and thirty-three conflicts between Turkish troops and Greek and Bulgarian bands, and a large but unrecorded

number of fights between rival bands: Greek and Wallach; Greek and Bulgarian; Bulgarian and Serb; and Albanian and Serb. The bands used to come down to the plains and carry off the crops outside Salonica itself. The Greek Committee sent a manifesto to the villages round Salonika ordering the villagers, under pain of death, to become converts to Orthodoxy and to accept the Patriarch, and have themselves inscribed as Greeks upon the census papers. Shortly before the Sultan's proclamation of the Constitution the artillery of the Salonica garrison had to shell the reed-covered swamps in the vicinity of the city to drive out the bands that had found shelter there.

It was in the city of Salonica that the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress decided to establish the head-quarters of the secret society that was to prepare the outbreak of rebellion in Macedonia, a city which, as being the cradle of their liberties, has already come to be regarded as a sort of holy place by patriotic Turks. It is a city worthy to be the scene of the initiation of one of the world's great movements. The splendid seaport, on the acquisition of which Austria had set her heart, impresses every visitor with a sense of a peculiar nobility with which it is invested by its aspect, situation, and history. Stately and beautiful is the approach to it from the sea as one sails up the fifty-mile broad Gulf of Salonica; on

the right the undulating land of Cassandra, with grassy, tree-studded shores, and windmills on the skyline testifying to the productiveness of the fields beyond; on the left the mountain ranges of Thessaly, with peaks whose names are known to every school-boy—Pelion to the south, then Ossa, and, near the head of the Gulf, a noble mountain mass towering over the lesser heights, with snowy summits ten thousand feet above the sea, Mount Olympus itself, the abode of the old gods.

From the busy quay of Salonica one looks across the blue water at the snows of Olympus and a wonderful far panorama of hills and dales of classic Greece; and Salonica itself is a fair city to look upon from the sea, with its gleaming white houses and minarets, and dark groves of cypress sloping up to the ancient castle and fortifications. I need not recall here the great part which Thessalonika played in the old days when Persians, Athenians, Macedonians, Romans, Normans of Sicily, and Saracens, in succession conquered and held the famous port, the principal city between Rome and the East; its vicissitudes and many bloody sieges. Old Thessalonika with its Greek, Roman, and Byzantine ruins, relics of "sad, half-forgotten things and battles long ago," the thronged city where St. Paul preached and worked with his hands among the Macedonian artisans, as the modern Salonica has once again come to the forefront in the shaping of the world's

history, and its citizens walk proudly because here dawned the liberty of the Ottomans, with its inspiring hopes. There is something about the atmosphere of Salonica which makes it seem a fitting place to be the birthplace of a great movement. One feels freer on its broad quay and in its clean, well-paved streets than in the narrow, ever muddy lanes which imprison one in Constantinople. The climate for the greater part of the year is most exhilarating, and the inhabitants of this white city, "ever delicately walking through most pellucid air," seem more vivacious and brisk, and are said to be more enlightened, more industrious, and shrewder than those of the capital.

Even under the tyranny and corruption of the old *régime* things were fairly well ordered in Salonica, and the municipal authorities did some good work, as the appearance of the streets shows, though they did appropriate, in the shape of irregular salaries, one half of the rates. Salonica, too, enjoyed a measure of liberty, even in those dark days, and men could do here many things which would have ensured their prompt punishment in Constantinople. For example, though meetings of any description were banned by the Palace, and a man could not invite two or three friends to dine with him in his house without permission, and though to be found guilty of being a Freemason was to incur the death penalty, Freemasonry (French, Grand Orient,

Spanish and Italian) flourished in Salonica; there were five Masonic Lodges in the town throughout the long years of despotism, though of course the Lodges had no fixed habitations, and the Masons used to meet in whatever house or perhaps lonely spot in the open country was at any time deemed to be the safest place.

In Salonica, with its teeming population of Turks, Greeks, Jews, Albanians, Bulgarians and Levantines of many mixed races, speaking divers tongues, it is easy for men to assume disguises and difficult for spies to trace conspiracies. In no city does one come across a greater variety of race and picturesque costume than in these busy bazaars and streets—the Jews (who here number fifty thousand) who look as if they had stepped straight out of the Venice of Shakespeare's time, the men in gabardines, the women in robes such as were worn by the ancestors of these people when they were driven out of Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, still speaking among themselves a strange Spanish dialect—swaggering Albanians in their picturesque becoming national costume of which Byron sang—burly Bulgarian peasants—priests of all denominations, including Russian monks of neighbouring Mount Athos, emissaries from that holy promontory on which for one thousand years no woman or even animal of the female sex has been allowed to set foot, where monks in their thousands dwell in ascetic retire-

ment in monasteries perched like the lamaseries of Tibet among the mountains, while in the wildest and most inaccessible spots anchorites have their hermitages and live in complete solitude after the manner of their predecessor, St. Anthony.

The fact that it was possible in this crowded city to escape observation and to organise secret societies made Salonica the natural centre of the Young Turk movement in Macedonia. Secret political organisation already existed there, and the Internal Organisations of the Bulgarian revolutionary party had had its head-quarters there since about 1895.

CHAPTER VIII

The secret society—Method of initiation—The Central Committee—Methods of the propaganda—The *contre* espionage—The part taken by the Turkish women in the revolution—How the army was won over to the cause—How the civil administration was undermined.

THUS, in the summer of 1906, the Young Turk movement crystallised into a secret society in Salonica, so well organised that it effected its purpose despite the universal espionage, its work, of course, being facilitated by the fact that in every part of the Empire the system of administration had become so hateful to the people that, outside the horde of spies, and those who prospered under the methods of the old *régime*, few men could be found so base as to betray the leaders to the authorities. It will make a wonderful story, when it is fully told, that of these men working in secret and danger, many losing their lives and still more their fortunes, but spreading their propaganda, becoming ever stronger, until at last, having secured the support of a great army and a powerful Church, they won liberty for Turkey by the almost bloodless revolution that has taken all Europe by surprise.

This secret society was to a large extent

modelled on Freemasonry, and a considerable proportion of the early associates (Mussulmans for the most part, with some Jews) were members of the Masonic Lodges in Salonica. The machinery of Freemasonry, however, was not directly employed to further the propaganda, and the Lodges took no official cognizance of this political movement. It would obviously have been too dangerous to discuss such a conspiracy as this one at Masonic gatherings, where the treason of one man could destroy so many. The methods of the Italian secret societies, where a member is introduced to two or three of the affiliated only and so cannot betray more than this number, were therefore adopted by those who framed the regulations of the new organisation. But still Freemasonry was a great help to the cause; for a member of the secret society who happened to be also a Mason, while he was seeking, as was his duty, to gain fresh initiates, could more readily approach a brother Mason than any other man with this purpose, knowing that the very fact of being a Mason indicated a natural inclination to be in sympathy with the aims of the Young Turks, and feeling also that he could rely upon the secrecy and fidelity of one of the fraternity.

The secret society was first known as the "Committee of Liberty," but shortly after its creation it was amalgamated with the "Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress" in Paris, and

became the working centre of that organisation. From that time the "Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress" had its secret head-quarters in Salonica, while Ahmed Riza and his associates remained in Paris to form an important branch committee that was able to further the cause in many ways from the secure sanctuary of a foreign capital. Thus it was in Paris, in 1907, more than a year after the establishment of the Committee's head-quarters in Salonica, that, at the instance of the Paris branch, there was held that Congress of Turkish revolutionaries of which I have already spoken, at which Committees representing the various races of the Empire agreed to co-operate with the Young Turks.

The secret central committee, therefore, held its meetings in Salonica, and kept up a constant communication with branch committees in Scutari of Albania, Monastir, Janina, and other towns, and later it had its small local committee in nearly every village of Macedonia and Albania. Before the outbreak of the revolution it had established its branch committees in all the important towns of Asiatic Turkey. Of those who composed the Salonica Committee I have met many. They were all men from what we should term the upper and middle classes—young officers in the army who had passed through the military schools and had profited by the splendid system of instruction introduced by the genius of Baron von der Goltz

—the one good thing for which Turkey has reason to be grateful to Germany; young civil servants of the different State departments; land-owning Macedonian beys; professors; lawyers; doctors and some of the *ulemas*. Of officers of high rank and of the heads of the Civil Service there were none; for most of these were creatures of the Palace, and such as may have had sympathy with the Young Turk cause were, in consequence of their position, too closely watched by the Yildiz spies to take an active part in the movement. All the men—for the most part men under middle age—who became members of the secret committee were distinguished for their intense and unselfish patriotism, men who commanded the respect and admiration of every foreigner who has come in contact with them. This revolution did not come from below, from debased city mobs or ignorant peasantry, but from above, from all that is best in Turkey. The self-seeking demagogue had no part in this revolution. These men, who devoted their lives to overthrowing the Despotism, represented the honest and patriotic Ottoman gentry, men who placed country above self-interest, the natural leaders of the people, belonging to a dominant race which knows how to command men—a more useful quality than much administrative knowledge.

Some of the principal members of the Committee of Union and Progress in Salonica spoke

to me when I was in that city, in November last, without reserve—as they will do to an Englishman who has gained their confidence—concerning their early secret organisation; for now that the danger is almost over they are quite willing that the methods which they were compelled to adopt before the granting of the Constitution should be made known. To understand with sympathy what I am about to describe, and recognise how fully justified were such assassinations as were ordered by the Committee, one must bear in mind the terrible nature of the late *régime;* how thousands of spies were scattered over the country whose business it was to denounce suspects to the Palace; how many of the best men in the country suddenly disappeared from their wives and families, never to return; how torture and death were the penalties for those who sought to set bounds to the Sultan's absolutism.

The machinery of this wonderful secret Society, which, throughout the three years preceding the granting of the Constitution, did its dangerous work so well, so unpityingly when the occasion demanded, but always so justly, has been described to me as follows by some of its best known founders:—

The propagandist work of a member of the Society was twofold. First, he had to gain adherents to the cause among all classes of the Turkish population by using arguments, explana-

tions and exhortations. Secondly, he had to persuade certain carefully selected persons from among his relations and more intimate friends to become affiliated to the Society, and this he had to do with the greatest caution. Thus, a member of the Society whom we will call A would approach his friend and, perhaps, brother Mason, B, whom he knew to be a righteous and patriotic man, to whom the methods of the Despotism must necessarily be detestable, and carefully sound him. Having satisfied himself that his friend was inspired by a true zeal, and was prepared to make great sacrifices for his country's salvation, A would say to B, "I have a secret, a great mystery, which I should like to confide to you. Will you swear never to divulge what I am about to say to any one?" On B taking the required oath, A would explain to him that there existed a powerful secret society of which he himself was a member, whose aim was the destruction of the existing system of government, and would then ask whether as a patriot he would like to join the brotherhood, warning him at the same time of the serious step he was about to take and of the great dangers which he would have to face.

On B's replying in the affirmative, A would leave him, and a few days later two messengers would come to B and call upon him in the name of his friend A to follow them. The messengers

would lead B to a lonely place, there blindfold him, and then take him to some retired house or recess in the forest which had been selected as the place of his initiation. Here he would be ordered to stand, the bandage still across his eyes, while he was addressed by two or more eloquent speakers, who would draw a vivid picture of the evils of the tyranny, of the certain destruction of the Ottoman Empire to which ill government was leading, of the great suffering which the Palace espionage had inflicted on so many of their friends and relations, and would show in burning words that it was the duty of every good Ottoman to do his utmost by all possible methods to assist in the liberation of Turkey. Turks often possess great oratorical powers, and I am assured that in nearly every instance the candidate would be moved to tears by these impressive exhortations. The candidate would be sworn to secrecy and fidelity and unquestioning obedience to the orders of the Committee, on the Koran and on the sword, and he would then be solemnly declared to be affiliated to the secret Society. In the rare cases in which the candidate was not a Mussulman the oath would of course be administered in some other way.

The bandage would then be removed from his eyes and he would find himself in the presence of five masked men wearing long cloaks. One of these would again address the initiate. First, he

would explain to him that precautions to secure secrecy and to make treason difficult were indispensable to the very existence of the Society, for the spies of the Palace were ever around it, while it was possible that some were even within its circle; that therefore it was expedient that the initiates should be as little known to each other as possible; and that it was on this account that those who now addressed him were masked, and, moreover, persons whom he had never previously met, so that it might be impossible for him to identify them by their voices. The speaker would then proceed to explain to the initiate his duties and obligations. He would remind him that the Committee condemned to death not only traitors but those who disobeyed its orders, and impress upon him that by the oath he had taken in the name of God and Mohammed his life would have to be devoted to the cause until Turkey was freed, that he belonged body and soul to the Society, and would have to go to whatever part of the world he was sent, and do whatever the Society bade him, even were it to kill his own brother. At the conclusion of this ritual B would again be blindfolded and be led away by the two messengers.

For some weeks or months after this initiation B would undergo a term of probation; orders would come to him by secret channels and he would obey them, but he would see no member

of the Society. His introducer, A, was responsible for his fidelity, and should B so act as to be condemned to death by the Society, it would be the hand of his friend A which would have to slay him. At last, B having proved himself worthy, the messengers would again summon him to a meeting of the secret Committee, and after a ceremony somewhat similar to the first, he would be affiliated to one of the companies into which the Society was divided, each company containing about one hundred and fifty members. But B would be made known to four men of his company and no more, for it was in circles of five only that the initiates used to meet. So it was impossible for any false member to betray more than five comrades—the four of his own circle and his introducer. In each circle of five one member served as a link with the other circles of the company; while each company had certain members who were the links between it and the other companies and with the Central Committee.

Of this secret Central Committee I can say little; for though now, the Despotism having been destroyed, the members of the Committee of Union and Progress have come out in the open, and every one knows who they are, they still appoint a secret central organisation, the names of whose members no man will tell you and few men know. But one is assured that this Committee has no president and no leaders, that all are equal

in it, and that a new chairman is elected at each meeting; for individual ambition is deprecated, and it was the original aim to make of this a band of brothers working with unselfish devotion, unknown, without desire for any recognition, for their country. The formation of any dominant group or camarilla within the Central Committee is made impossible by the regulations which govern its procedure.

Just before the proclamation of the Constitution the initiates of the Committee of Union and Progress, in Macedonia alone, numbered fifteen thousand. It was the duty of each member to spread the propaganda by conversing with men of all classes, a delicate and very dangerous task, as one may well imagine. Many were arrested at the instance of the spies, to be imprisoned or to lose their lives. Many of the captured were taken to the Palace and offered large bribes in return for information, and, this failing, tortures were applied, but with no effect. There was not one single instance of the betrayal of his brethren by a member of the Society.

The organisation of this wonderful secret Society was very complete. To meet the expenses each member was compelled to contribute a fixed percentage of his income to the Committee chest, while rich members, in addition to this tax, made generous donations when funds were required. Arms and ammunition were secretly purchased.

A considerable sum was set apart annually to provide for the families of members who lost life or liberty while working for the cause. Their several duties were apportioned to the members. There were the messengers who, disguised in various ways, went to and fro over the Empire carrying verbal reports and instructions, for naturally communications between branches of the association and orders to individual members could not be confided to the postal and telegraph services. There were the men who had to assassinate those whom the Committee had condemned to death—Government officials who were working against the movement with a dangerous zeal, and Palace spies who were getting on the scent. Other members were sent out to act as spies in the interest of the cause, and the *contre espionage* became at last so thorough that it baffled the *espionage* of the Palace. Men whom the Palace paid as its spies were often the loyal agents of the secret Society. The Committee had its agents in every department of the Government, in the Civil Service, in the War Office, in the Custom House, in the post and telegraph offices, even in the foreign post-offices in Constantinople and other big cities; so that official communications were intercepted and read and the most secret designs of the Palace were revealed to the Committee and could therefore be circumvented. The Committee had its spies in

the Turkish Embassies in foreign countries, among the retainers of influential Pashas, and in the Yildiz Palace itself. For example, a correspondent, writing to the *Times* from Salonica, tells the story of Dr. Baha-ud-Din, formerly physician to one of the Imperial princes, who had been exiled to the Russian frontier. He returned secretly to the capital, and for the three months preceding the revolution remained in the Palace undetected, supplying the Committee with a good deal of useful information. Suspicion fell upon him a few days before the revolution broke out, so he had to fly for his life, and became an active member of the Committee in Salonica.

Then there was the host of propagandists who were scattered all over the Empire doing their dangerous work, urging the civil population to embarrass the Government by a refusal to pay taxes and to prepare for a general rising, and persuading the soldiery of the righteousness of the movement, and obtaining their promise not to fight against their own countrymen when ordered to do so. So as to obtain easy access to houses and barracks, Turkish officers disguised themselves as hawkers of cheap jewelry and ribbons, or as the peripatetic sutlers who sell sherbet and little comforts to the Turkish soldier; and in their packs were always concealed the revolutionary tracts that were to spread the propaganda. One well-known officer for long kept a barber's

shop in Bagdad, and inoculated his customers with the doctrines of the conspiracy. Dr. Nazim Bey, who had been exiled, wandered over Asia Minor for eighteen months, sometimes disguised as a peddler, sometimes as a *hodja*, in order to win over the Anatolian regiments. He made initiates among the officers, and conversed with the men to such good effect that when the Sultan, in the last days of the old *régime*, despatched several battalions of the Anatolian army, to crush the military insurrection in Macedonia, these troops not only refused to fire on their comrades, but joined forces with them.

One remarkable feature of the propaganda was the great part taken in it by the Turkish women. They were largely employed, for example, in the delivery of messages and the carrying of documents; for it was easy for the wife of a member of the Committee to visit the wives of other members without attracting observation. The respect that is paid to women in Turkey gives them immunity from being searched; the women's apartments in a Turkish house are held to be inviolable, and a police officer would not venture to infringe these cherished customs without very weighty cause. The following incident exemplifies this: Shortly after the revolution had made the Committee the virtual ruler of Turkey, some young officers were sent to pay a domiciliary visit to the house of a Pasha suspected of being a party

to a reactionary plot. They arrested the Pasha, but made a vain search for incriminatory documents. At last they came across a chest that had obviously been concealed, and felt confident that they had at last discovered what they were seeking. At this juncture the Pasha's wife came forward and stated that the chest contained her jewels and other property; whereupon the officers refrained from opening it, and, saluting the lady, left the house.

The first and most important task before the Committee was, of course, that of bringing round to the cause the Macedonian garrison—the Third Army Corps. The disaffection of these troops, the reasons for which I have explained, had in places manifested itself in open mutiny, and the incompetence and corruption of some of the officers of superior rank, who were indebted to Palace favouritism for their position, filled both the junior officers and the rank and file with an ever-increasing disgust. By degrees a number of the young officers were affiliated to the Committee, and received instructions to win over the rank and file. The fact that the troops were moving about in small bodies, hunting down the Bulgarian bands, rendered this proceeding the more easy; for while engaging in this work, regimental officers, unrestrained by the supervision of their superiors, could give political instruction to the men, and were able to hold meetings among them-

selves without attracting the attention of spies; the company commanders used also to deliver lectures to their men in out-of-the-way places, where any stranger would be conspicuous and Palace spies would be immediately recognised. Whenever a spy was discovered he promptly disappeared, soldiers who had taken the oath of fealty to the Committee being given the word to kill him. At last the whole Macedonian army was won over to the cause of the Young Turks, and as a consequence of the work performed by the disguised officers in other parts of the Empire, the Second Army Corps, which garrisons the Vilayet of Adrianople, also contained a large proportion of officers and men in sympathy with the movement —troops hostile to the Despotism thus enclosing the capital on all sides—while on the further shore of the Bosphorus, Anatolia, whose sturdy peasantry supplies the Ottoman Empire with its finest troops, had been similarly prepared by Dr. Nazim Bey and numerous officers.

To those Englishmen who knew something of the Turkish army it appeared an amazing thing that these soldiers, who worshipped the Sultan with a blind faith not only as their sovereign, but as the head of the one true religion, "the Commander of the Faithful," "the Shadow of God upon earth," —however discontented they might be, however ready to mutiny, as they sometimes did mutiny, against their officers—could be persuaded to join

in a movement of which the avowed object was the deposition of the Sultan Abdul Hamid. The soldier could only be won over by convincing him that religion itself commanded the overthrow of the tyrant. It will be remembered how, in 1876, the Sheikh-ul-Islam, as chief of the interpreters of the Sacred Law, decreed that the Sultan Abd-ul-Aziz should be deposed because, in ruining the State which God had confided to him, he had broken his sacred trust, and could no longer be head of the believers. The young officers put the case in the same way, and in simple words, to the honest and devout soldiery; they quoted the passages in the Koran which denounce tyranny, and showed that the Sultan was not true to his country, and therefore had forfeited the privileges God had lent to him. The fact that Austria and Germany had been granted concessions to construct railways through Turkish territory (the proposed railway through the Sanjak of Novi-Bazaar, which would afford Austria railway connection with Salonica, and the German-owned Bagdad railway) was a proof to the soldier that the Palace was selling the country bit by bit to the foreigner.

During the early days of the propaganda, *hodjas* who had joined the Committee, and officers disguised as *hodjas*, being freely admitted into barracks in their capacity of preachers, advocated these doctrines, and satisfied the religious scruples of the men; and when, later, the Sheikh-ul-Islam

declared himself in favour of the Constitution, there remained no doubt in their minds that they were acting as their creed commanded in following the lead of their young officers. As a matter of fact, it was not difficult to show that Abdul Hamid, to quote from Mr. Hamil Halid's book, *The Diary of a Young Turk*, was "the worst enemy of Islam, as no Moslem ruler has ever brought by his misdeeds so much shame upon the faith as he has. Any one who has observed his career closely, knows that his actions are diametrically opposed to the principles of the Mussulman law and creed." Moreover, the Turkish soldier, like the soldiers in other armies and the majority of healthy young men, can be appealed to through his stomach, and he naturally acquired an affection for and confidence in these majors, captains and lieutenants of the new school who sympathised with him, pitied his wretched condition, and with their own money, or the Committee funds, supplemented his miserable rations and supplied him with comforts.

Of the methods of the propaganda in Macedonia we learn a good deal from the published letters of Major Niazi Bey, the officer who first raised the standard of revolt. He explains how, gradually, the young officers, hitherto estranged from one another by the mutual suspicions engendered by the system of espionage, were emboldened by the patriotic hopes held up before them, and through

the possession of a common secret became as a band of brothers, mutual confidence and affection increasing daily; and how even those who had not been made members of the secret Society, and knew not its mysteries, were convinced by their affiliated comrades that the Committee was powerful and just, and was working in the sacred name of liberty for the integrity of the fatherland; and so sympathised heart and soul with the movement, and were in readiness to co-operate with the revolutionaries.

In the meanwhile the Committee was steadily undermining the entire civil as well as military administration of the Empire. It acted, as a member of the association put it to me, like a well-ordered but secret Government. It kept books in which were inscribed the names of all the higher Government officials, with particulars as to their careers and habits—their *dossiers*, in short. Some of the enlightened and right-minded of these officials had been gained over to the cause; the others were closely watched, and whether they were *Valis*, Inspectors General, or Governors of districts, or what not, their moral influence was destroyed, and their authority was made impotent by the fact that their subordinates, on whom they had to rely for the execution of their wishes, had almost without exception become adherents of the Committee.

CHAPTER IX

How the revolution was precipitated—The Committee's manifesto to the Great Powers—The Reval Meeting—Efforts of the Palace to crush the revolutionary movement—The Spy Commission—The Committee condemns to death the agents of the Palace—Nazim Bey attempts to unearth the secret Committee—Ismail Pasha's Commission—An army is despatched from Asia Minor.

IT had been calculated by the Young Turks that the time would not be ripe for their great *coup* until the autumn of 1909, but the menace of further foreign intervention in Macedonia and an active campaign against the Committee, which was opened by the Palace at the beginning of 1908, precipitated the revolt. The propaganda had been spreading rapidly, the movement had been prospering, when suddenly the prospect darkened, and there were happenings that threatened even to break up the Society and shatter the hopes of the reformers.

It became known to the Committee that the British Government had decided to withdraw from that "Concert of Europe," which had failed so signally in dealing with the question of reforms in Macedonia, and that England and Russia were now going to work together to introduce a most

drastic scheme of reform, which would include the suppression of all the bands in Macedonia, of whatever race or creed, by means of flying columns of troops. This intended co-operation of England and Russia greatly alarmed the Committee, such intervention, in the opinion of its leaders, necessarily leading to the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, and to an immediate foreign domination of Macedonia that would make it impossible for the Committee to carry on its patriotic work in this, the stronghold of the movement and the contemplated base for the revolutionary campaign in the following year.

The Committee of Union and Progress therefore held secret meetings in Salonica in May 1908, and it was decided, in view of what was happening, that it had now become necessary for the Committee to reveal to the European Powers the fact of its real existence and great influence, and also to explain to those Powers, especially to England, whose aim was honest but which, in the opinion of many Turks, was being duped by Russia, that the Committee alone could bring peace to Macedonia, and that for various good reasons it would be better that Europe should abandon all these futile schemes of reform and leave Macedonia to work out her own salvation.

A manifesto of the Committee was therefore drawn up and a copy of it was despatched to each of the European cabinets. These documents

were posted in the foreign post-offices in Salonica by members of the Committee. A friend of mine told me of what a narrow escape he had while taking one of these letters to a certain foreign post-office. On entering the office he handed the letter to a Levantine clerk, who, after reading the superscription, put to him the unusual question, "From whom do you bring this letter?" "From Mr. Snider," replied my friend, with ready invention, and hastened to leave the place. The clerk, evidently a Palace spy, followed him outside and looked up and down the street, no doubt to find some agent whom he could send to follow up the suspect. My friend fortunately got clear away before the pursuit could be started, and for the future he gave that post-office a wide berth.

The manifesto itself is a long one. My quotations from it are literal translations from the original Turkish version. It speaks in the name of the Committee of Union and Progress, and, of course, as coming from a secret society, bears no signatures. It opens thus—

"We, the children of the fatherland called Turkey, of which Macedonia is a part—actuated by the love which we bear to the land of our birth, our desire to work in harmony to bring about its tranquillity and welfare, and our wish to disabuse your minds of the false impression which we know you entertain to the effect that we (the Committee of Union and Progress) are few in

number and mischievous in our aims—now write to you the following, to explain to you from what evils Macedonia is really suffering, to show you what is the true remedy and the right path, and to save Europe from a number of vain efforts and avoidable difficulties."

The manifesto then proceeds to demonstrate that the efforts of the European Powers to introduce reforms into Macedonia had not only been attended with no success, but had made the condition of the country worse than it had been before their interference, and that all the so-called remedies that had so far been applied had been introduced by foreigners only, "who assumed an attitude of generosity," and not by "Ottomans, who must know more about their own country than the foreigner does.

"We are told that the object of European reforms is to insure the happiness of Macedonia, in answer to which we assert that Europe, in spite of all her efforts, has been unable to attain this object and never will attain it. . . . The intervention has been useless for Europeans, injurious to the Ottomans. The Great Powers themselves admit the failure of the measures adopted by them; and yet now, Europe, instead of honourably withdrawing from this business, is, so it appears, about to make Macedonia the arena of yet further experiments." Then the manifesto, after discussing the new schemes proposed by the British and

Russian Governments, and showing how these, if carried out, would destroy the independence of an integral part of the Ottoman Government, declares that "We Mussulmans and Christians, united under the name of the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress, not influenced by national or religious fanaticism, are working together to deliver our country from foreign intervention, and to obtain our personal and political liberty from the existing Government. We positively assert that these plans of England and Russia would sever Macedonia from the Ottoman Empire. We therefore cannot accept these proposed measures, which would lead to the general ruin of the Empire, and are opposed to justice and civilisation. We are determined to employ all means to obtain our natural rights." The manifesto points out that the purely selfish action of Bulgaria, Greece, and Servia, which for purposes of annexation sent their bands to murder and ravage in Macedonia, was the chief cause of the existing state of anarchy in the country; and it has a slap at our humanitarians, whose sole sympathy was with the Christians. As the first public declaration of the Committee this is an exceedingly interesting document.

I need scarcely say that the Committee of Union and Progress did not receive a reply to its memorandum from any of the Great Powers. Cabinets cannot well recognise and hold com-

munication with a revolutionary organisation whose aim it is to overthrow the Government of a friendly Power. Probably some of those to whom the manifesto was addressed read it with a contemptuous smile, little dreaming that within two months this band of unknown men would make itself the master of an Empire. One or two newspapers published brief summaries of the manifesto without comment, for the world did not take the Young Turkey party seriously until the revolution was an accomplished fact.

On June 10—that is, a week or so after the Committee had issued this manifesto—King Edward VII met the Tsar at Reval, and shortly afterwards the details of the Anglo-Russian scheme for the pacification and better rule of Macedonia was communicated to the Powers. This forced the hands of the Committee; it was realised that the blow for Ottoman liberty must be struck soon, or it would be too late; but that which precipitated the movement, driving the Macedonian officers into an immediate revolt in self-defence, was the energetic action taken by the Palace spies at about this time.

In the beginning of 1908 the Palace became alarmed by the reports that came from the Macedonian garrisons. It is true that up to that time the discontent of the troops had assumed no revolutionary character, and at the meetings which they held in all the military centres the

men, while demanding their rights under the military code, their arrears of pay, their proper rations, and so forth, uttered no threats against the Government; but the discipline and organisation of the army had been destroyed, and a number of the reservists in Macedonia went so far as to refuse to obey the call for service in the Hedjaz. The Palace now learnt that a number of young officers were taking advantage of this disaffection of the rank and file to spread treasonable propaganda. The rapid progress of the Young Turkey movement, and the wide dissemination of its doctrines through the towns and villages by trusted emissaries, made it impossible to preserve a complete secrecy, and the creatures of the Palace, though they could not place their hands upon those who directed this movement, felt that they were in the presence of a great danger, all the more terrible on account of the mystery that enveloped it. So they laid their apprehensions before their ever-fearful master, with the result that it was decided to take steps to effectually stamp out the conspiracy.

Espionage has ever been the favourite weapon of Abdul Hamid; so spies were now poured into Macedonia to worm out the secrets of the movement and discover the leaders, and of these spies many never returned to tell their tale. The Sultan also gave orders to the senior officers in Macedonia to find out all they could about the movement, to

arrest suspected officers and send them to Constantinople, and to solemnly address the men concerning their duties, and especially impress it upon them that to withdraw their fidelity and obedience from the Caliph, "the Shadow of God," "the Commander of the Faithful," was regarded by the Moslem religion as the most heinous of sins. In March, a special Commission, under Mahir Pasha, was sent from Constantinople to Salonica to institute an inquisition, but despite numerous denunciations, perquisitions, arrests, and tortures, it collected little evidence, and entirely failed to get at the heart of the plot, for there were no traitors within that circle of devoted men. But the Commission was able to report to the Palace that there undoubtedly existed in Macedonia a powerful secret society dangerous to the *régime*, and that the Macedonian troops could not be relied upon to support the Government.

The work of the Commission alarmed the Committee of Union and Progress, several of whose most useful members had been seized; and the young officers in the army who had been affiliated realised their danger, and came to the conclusion that it would be expedient to start the insurrection as soon as possible, before further arrests had seriously weakened their cause. Thus it happened that, quite a year before the time originally contemplated by the

Committee, Major Niazi Bey, at Resna, on July 3, took the momentous step. He openly disavowed his allegiance to his sovereign, fled to the mountains with a band of Moslem civilians and some of the soldiers under his command, and issued his rebel manifesto, in which he called upon all patriots to join in destroying the Government. I will tell later the story of the doings of Niazi Bey, Enver Bey, and the other insurgent leaders in the mountains; how officers and men rallied round them; how they persuaded the Bulgarian bands to join forces with them; how at last the entire Macedonian army had become the army of the Committee; and how, within three weeks of that historic event—the raising of the banner of revolt at Resna—the revolution had triumphed and the Despotism was a thing of the past. At this stage I will describe the series of events that precipitated the final struggle between the Palace and the Committee.

In view of the increasing activity of its enemies, the Committee, at its secret meetings, condemned to death and ordered the execution of such instruments of the Palace as were the most dangerous to the cause, including several of the senior officers in the Macedonian army and all those who were found to be spies or informers. Towards the end it must have become difficult for the Palace to find men willing to embark on so dangerous a profession as that of spy, even for the highest pay.

Had it not been for these assassinations the conspiracy must have failed; at the cost of these few lives Turkey was saved, and a terrible persecution of her best sons by the vengeful Palace was warded off. These killings of the condemned as often as not were done in broad daylight, in a busy street, by officers in uniform, and no man interfered with the executioners.

Thus, on July 7, General Shemshi Pasha, an able soldier, who, as possessing considerable experience in suppressing Macedonian and Albanian risings, had been sent to crush the mutiny, was shot dead in the streets of Monastir in broad daylight by a young officer. Next, the officer commanding at Seres and certain other officers who upheld the cause of the Palace were killed. On July 10 the *imam*, or chaplain, of the artillery regiment in Monastir, who had been acting as a spy in barracks, was shot in the streets of Salonica while he was on his way to the railway station to carry his information to the capital. On the same day, and also in Salonica, an attempt was made on the life of Haki Bey, a Palace informant, who had been a member of the Commission of inquiry. On July 12, General Sadik Pasha was shot while on a Messagerie steamer bound from Salonica to Constantinople. The Committee was now fighting, so to speak, with the halter round its neck, and took no risks; it removed those whose action might bring ruin upon the cause of the

Young Turks, for the chances of success or failure were still very uncertain.

The Palace realised its danger, and knew—what the outer world did not know—that this was no ordinary mutiny of discontented troops. The Sultan's most trusted officers, when sent to crush the rising, could not get their men to fire upon their insurgent fellow Moslems, and were sometimes themselves assassinated by them. For the first time in history the name of the Padishah had failed to inspire the pious Ottoman soldiery with reverence and obedience. The Palace was now thoroughly alarmed, and no measure was omitted that could help to bring about the destruction of the Young Turkey conspiracy. It was decided, among other things, that another effort should be made to get at the very heart of the movement, to strangle the secret Central Committee, which, as the spies suspected, worked in Salonica; for if the ringleaders and the central organisation could be exterminated, the movement would become a lifeless thing and fall to pieces.

So Colonel Nazim Bey, an A.D.C. of the Sultan, one of the most detested and feared of the instruments of the Despotism, was sent to Salonica with a body of spies to unearth the secret Committee. Nazim was a typical creature of the Palace. Extravagant and vicious, ever in debt, like Cataline, prodigal of his own while greedy for the possessions of others, clever, and

quite unscrupulous, he was ready to sell his soul for the moneys of which he was ever in need. He was appointed Commandant de Place in Salonica. Denunciations were well paid for, so he denounced many officers, professional men, and students on the flimsiest evidence, for real evidence was not easily procurable. On one day he despatched thirty-eight young officers to Constantinople, who were imprisoned on their arrival. But in many cases those whose arrest he ordered were immediately set free or escaped with the assistance of officials in the police and other departments, many of whom, as I have explained, were secret adherents of the Committee. Nazim, who knew well what found favour in his master's eyes, also sent reports to the Palace regarding the conduct of his superiors in Salonica, accusing distinguished general officers of the head-quarters staff and others of carelessness, partiality, and covert sympathy with the Young Turks, with the result that he was given still further emoluments, and was so strongly supported by the Palace that he was enabled to successfully arrogate the chief authority in the city. The Committee of Union and Progress condemned Nazim to death, one of his own subordinates signing the decree. A young lieutenant of infantry offered himself as the executioner. Nazim, however, had taken fright, and on July 11 he fled from Salonica. As he was driving to the station in his carriage he was

shot at, but was only slightly wounded; so he was able to reach Constantinople and report to the Sultan the information which he had collected concerning the revolutionary movement.

As the result of Nazim Bey's alarming report, another Commission of inquiry was sent from Constantinople to Salonica. It was under the presidency of Ismail Mahir Pasha, General of Division and A.D.C. to the Sultan—who, it having been discovered by the Committee that he was the leader of a reactionary plot, was shot dead in the streets of Stamboul by an officer in December last—and it contained, among other notable men, Youssouf Pasha, Rejet Pasha and Sadik Pasha. The ostensible object of the Commission was to inspect arsenals and military stores; but this the Commissioners never attempted to do. They took up their abode in the principal hotel in Salonica. A friend of mine, now editor of one of Turkey's principal papers, who was told off by the Committee to live in the hotel and keep the Commissioners under observation, found that they rarely ventured out of doors, but sent for and proceeded to examine closely all manner of men.

The *contre espionage* conducted against them by the Committee to a large extent baffled their designs; even the people employed by the Commission to gather incriminating information were as often as not initiates of the secret Society. But though the Commission could not get at the

heart of the conspiracy it displayed great activity, and the denunciations to the Palace were numerous; for, as with the other spy commissions, proofs of complicity in the plot were not necessary to condemnation, and to be known as an honest and patriotic Ottoman subject was sufficient ground for accusation. The Commission also had its branches in the interior of Macedonia. In Monastir, Persepe and other garrison towns certain officers became its agents; but most of these were discovered by the Committee and had to fly, and some, including Sami Bey, Commissioner of Police in Monastir, were destroyed by the executioners of the Committee.

So thoroughly had all the machinery of official authority been destroyed in Macedonia that it was difficult for the Commissioners to secure the arrests of those who had been denounced, therefore treacherous methods were now employed to get the ringleaders within the clutches of the Palace. The Sultan believed that every man had his price, and on previous occasions he had found bribery succeed where terrorism failed. The most flattering letters were sent to Enver Bey and other young staff officers who had been forwarding the revolutionary cause in the interior of Macedonia with such marked success; they were invited to the Palace and were promised not only forgiveness but large pecuniary rewards and promotion to general rank. Many a good man from the time

of Midhat Pasha had been tempted by the Palace to come out from some secure sanctuary to his destruction by such wiles as these. So Enver Bey and his comrades ignored this invitation, but at the same time, realising the danger of non-compliance, they fled to the mountains, organised bands, and as open insurgents precipitated the doom of the Despotism. At the same time other methods of conciliation were attempted by the Palace. A large sum of hastily borrowed money was sent to Salonica to discharge the arrears of pay due to the troops, and the authorities in Constantinople refrained from doing any injury to the thirty-eight young officers of the Macedonian army who had been imprisoned at the Ministry of War. To anticipate a little, these officers were pardoned and released on July 21 as the result of the Committee's threat to kill all the general officers in Macedonia unless this was done.

Ismail Pasha and his fellow Commissioners returned to Constantinople, their efforts having had the effect of spreading the growth which they had been sent to root up. The Palace, which throughout this crisis exemplified the truth that whom the gods wish to destroy they first make demented, for it took every precaution too late and displayed a vacillation that ruined what chances it had, now decided to do what, if it had been done some months earlier, might have crushed the Young Turk movement and left

Abdul Hamid the undisputed master of the Ottoman Empire. It was decided to despatch a large army from Asia to overpower the mutinous troops in Europe, and orders were given that no less than forty-eight battalions of Anatolian troops should be landed forthwith at Salonica. But before describing the failure of this last move on the part of the Despotism it will be necessary to go back a little to give an account of what had been happening in the interior of Macedonia since Niazi Bey had raised the standard of revolt at Resna on July 3, and of how everything was there being made ready for the general insurrection.

CHAPTER X

Niazi Bey—His military career—Decision to open the insurrection in the Resna district—Niazi forms a band—The *fedais* and their duties—Niazi's manifestoes to the Government—Niazi raises the standard of revolt—He and his band take to the mountains—His address to his men.

THE situation in Macedonia in July 1908, when Niazi Bey took to the mountains, may be summed up thus: The Bulgarian, Greek, Servian, Wallach and Albanian bands were murdering, robbing, outraging each other's kin all over the country; the Committee of Union and Progress, having established its branches in Monastir, Ochrida, Resna, Persepe, and other places, was engaged in steadily spreading its propaganda through all the countryside, a large proportion of the young officers of the Macedonian army being initiates or sympathisers with the cause; and, lastly, the Palace had taken its precautions, and there was not a town or regiment without its secret Government agents ferreting out the secrets of the conspiracy and denouncing the suspects.

Niazi Bey, the young officer who was the first to raise the standard of revolt, was a good example of the men who were forthcoming in numbers at

this period of Turkey's great danger, men who proved to the world the stubborn virtues of the old Ottoman stock, intensely patriotic, brooding over the sorrows of their country, seeking a plan for her deliverance, and, that plan once found, devoting themselves, with the passionate zeal of men obsessed by a fixed idea, to the carrying out of their high aim. They were not self-seeking; if they cherished ambition, it was for the martyr's death; they were prepared to sacrifice their careers, their wives and families, and their property, for the cause, and, as we shall see, when Niazi set out with his little band of followers on that wonderful forlorn hope of his, each took an oath not to return to his wife and family until Turkey was freed; before going they bade last farewells to those they loved; for them it was to be victory or death. With a Mussulman Turk, love of country is a part of his religion, and his single-minded devotion has the strength of fanaticism. When in an oppressed country there is a sufficiency of men of this stamp, the days of the tyranny are numbered.

This spirit breathes through the published letters and diary of Niazi Bey, wherein, telling us a good deal in very frank fashion about his thoughts, aspirations and emotions, he provides us with a most interesting human document.. That he thus writes so freely and often with poetical diction concerning his sentiments will surprise

Englishmen, who have always heard that reserve is one of the characteristics of the Turk. The Turk is reserved in his relations with the Western European, who so little understands him. But the Turk, as all his literature proves, is sentimental and emotional with the sentiment and emotion that are the sources of strength and not of weakness. The Turk reveals his heart to his friend with a truthful simplicity that would seem lack of proper reticence to Englishmen, many of whom appear to be ashamed to let it be supposed that they have any affection for their wives or parents; but we ourselves, as the memoirs of the time show, did not take so much care to hide our emotions when Nelson was gaining victories on the seas. So Niazi, having no false shame, makes no secret of his brave deeds, his musings and his affections, and one likes him the better for it. But Niazi, though devoted to high ideals, was no dreamer or unpractical and rash revolutionary. Like most of his countrymen he was endowed with plenty of cool common-sense, and displayed the shrewdness and cunning of the Homeric Odysseus in the carrying through of his audacious adventure.

Niazi Bey is himself an Albanian, his family belonging to the Mussulman land-owning class. He was born in Resna, a little town between Monastir and Ochrida, in a region where fertile valleys studded with orchards and cornfields, grassy downs, forest-clad mountains, craggy

Balkan peaks and gorges, and broad lakes combine to make as beautiful a scenery as can be found in Europe. Niazi had known this country-side from his childhood, and he had friends in all the villages, so when it was decided to make this the scene of the first outbreak of the insurrection it was recognised that he was the right man to come forward as leader. Niazi entered the army as a very young man and greatly distinguished himself in the Greek war. Then he was sent to his own country, and for the five years preceding the revolution he was employed with his battalion of chasseurs in pursuing the various brigand bands in the mountains. Again he gained distinction, temporarily crushed the power of the Bulgarian insurrectionary Committee in the Resna district, and became very popular with the Moslem section of the population, whose property and lives he zealously set himself to protect. The Committee of Union and Progress, exercising its powerful underground influence, obtained for him promotion to the rank of Major and his appointment to headquarters at Resna, the place in which he could serve the cause best. For Niazi had been initiated into the secret Society by his brother officer, the now famous Enver Bey, and throughout his operations against the bands was acting as the instrument of the Committee rather than that of the despotic Government.

The story of Niazi's work at this time throws an

interesting light on the condition of Macedonia. When he was moved to Resna, Bulgarian and Albanian bands, acting in conjunction, were terrorising that district. It was his duty to seize the leaders of the non-Moslem bands and to scatter the bands themselves. He was successful in doing this, though his methods were not cruel or vindictive; for, as he tells us, he was sorry to be hunting down these men who, after all, were fighting against a despotism which was as detestable to himself as it was to them. So he used to call together the Christian notables, who had known him from his childhood and trusted him, and point out to them that their separatist dreams could never be realised, that it was better for them to repudiate those bringers of bloodshed, the agitators in Athens, Sophia and Belgrade, and join in union and brotherhood with their Moslem fellow-countrymen, whose grievances against the Government were as heavy as their own. His words, recognised as sincere, produced a good effect.

At Niazi's advice some Moslem inhabitants of the district formed themselves into a band which was under the direction of the Committee of Union and Progress. This band used to go about the country, protecting the villagers without any distinction of race or creed. Thus at one time it would be defending a village of Bulgarians against the attack of a Serb band, and at another time a

Serb village against a Bulgarian band. This band was well disciplined, committed no excesses of any kind, and did not even requisition the necessaries of life in the villages; conduct so extraordinarily Quixotic for a Macedonian band that it gained for the Committee the good opinion of the Albanians, who began to come in numbers to Ochrida and Monastir to take the oath of allegiance to the revolutionary leaders.

But so fast as the labours of Niazi and the Committee helped on the pacification of the country, so fast did the evil policy of the Government, alternating between encouragement of lawlessness and cruel repression, undo all the good that had been effected. The corrupt tribunals could be bought. Thus, after the troops under Niazi had brought in some hundreds of people who had been found in the possession of bombs and arms, their trial resulted in the condemnation of twenty poor peasants and the acquittal of all the really dangerous rebels who happened to be rich townsmen, a miscarriage of justice which held Niazi and his brother officers up to ridicule and of course encouraged the Christian bands to redouble their mischievous activity. On the other hand, the Government sent to Persepe, to put down the insurgents, an officer of passionate temper who did not know the customs or languages of the people, and was unable to gain their confidence. He tortured and beat the

peasantry and behaved with such inhumanity that the foreign Powers made representations to the Porte on the subject. Thus dictated to, the Government arrested and sent away this officer, again with the result that the Bulgarian bands were encouraged in their brigandage, as was always the case when foreign intervention humiliated Turkey. At this time, too, the Committee found an enemy in the Russian Consul for this district. He exerted his influence to procure the withdrawal of Niazi Bey from the scene of his successful labours. So Niazi was summoned to Salonica and was rebuked by the General in command, but he was not impeached and, fortunately for his country, he was allowed to return to his post at Resna. The Government of Russia was then arranging with that of England its joint intervention in Macedonia, and any improvement in the state of affairs of that region that might render such intervention unnecessary would no doubt have been regarded as a calamity by Russian statesmen.

At about this time Kermanle Metre, once a leader of a rebel band, who had been pardoned and had since done signal service as a Government officer, was tried and condemned to death unjustly, as the result of Russian intrigue. This cowardly betrayal of a valued servant by the Government aroused profound indignation throughout the Macedonian army, and was one of the most

important of the factors that combined to effect the moral union between, not only the army, but also the Moslem civil population, with the Committee of Union and Progress; for the incident was a proof to the Mussulmans that the Government was an immoral one, "acting in defiance of the Sacred Law, the Moslem Religion and Ottoman ideals." Niazi Bey himself received orders to take Kermanle Metre to Monastir, and he determined to save his prisoner's life at the risk of his own. So, after arresting him, he connived at his flight, and the agents of the Committee restored the man to his home. This escape of their compatriot from the gallows with the assistance of the Committee of Union and Progress produced a great effect upon the Bulgarian peasants in the district, who said to themselves that a power that administered justice had at last risen in the land; and from this time the Bulgarian revolutionaries used to listen with an increasing respect and sympathy to Niazi when he argued that Mussulmans and Christians, being all brothers of one fatherland, should work in union to obtain a Government that would assure justice and equality for all.

While Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbs in Macedonia by noise and violence had been urging their racial claims in anticipation of the break-up of the Turkish Empire, the Moslem Turks under the direction of the Committee of Union and Progress

had been steadily and patiently working for the liberation of their country, employing methods so secret that the outer world knew nothing of the movement and was deceived into thinking that the Mussulman backbone of the population was regarding the progress of events with indifference. The European Powers had ignored the memorandum in which the Committee had protested against the intervention of England and Russia in Macedonia, and patriots recognised that the time had arrived to come out in the open and strike the blow for freedom before that intervention and the increasing activity of the Palace spies had made it too late to act with any chance of success. Towards the end of June it was realised that it needed but a spark to start a general rising, and it was decided that certain young officers, who were members of the Committee, should abandon the Government service, form bands in various places, take to the mountains and organise the insurrection of the united Mussulman and Christian populations.

Niazi Bey apparently was the first to conceive this idea. He had become the zealot whose mind is occupied by but one thought; he tells us that he did not sleep for three nights after learning the result of the Reval meeting. He formed his plan. The population of the Resna district was largely Moslem, and in both town and country the organisation of the Committee of Union and Progress

was practically complete. In that mountainous and wooded region a Moslem band, helped by a sympathetic peasantry, could, if necessary, hold the Government troops for months and years. So he broached the matter to his friend Jemal Bey, president of the municipality of Resna; Tahir Effendi, the Police Commissioner; and other of the brethren; and it was arranged to hold a secret meeting of the adherents of the Committee in the house of one Haji Agha, on the evening of June 28.

About fifty men were present at this meeting. The following is a summary of the report of the proceedings as published by the Committee. Niazi Bey, after the usual salutations, thus addressed the brethren: "Fellow-countrymen and comrades. You have sworn by the Unity of God to obey the commands of the Committee, and to save the country, which is being destroyed by traitors, by working together in concord and giving your lives and property freely. Is it not so?" All cried "*Evet! evet!*" (Yes! yes!). "The time has come," continued Niazi, "to redeem that sacred vow. The country now needs our devotion. Our vile Government is regarding with indifference the compact which has been agreed upon at Reval between the Czar of Russia and the King of England, which aims at the division of our fatherland and the delivery of it into the hands of our enemies. The cruel scheming of

Europe can only be frustrated by the blood of the nation. It is the decision of the Committee that we should rise as a nation against the vile Turkish Government which is bowing its head before this humiliating compact. It was at Resna that the Bulgarians first revolted, and brought this calamity upon us. So, therefore, at Resna shall our first standard of revolt be raised—a general revolt, without distinction of creed or race, against the despotic Government. I have prepared everything. I can provide all that is needed to equip a band of two hundred men—money, arms, ammunition, cartridge-belts, sandals. I only need enthusiastic and devoted men; but I want in them a devotion that will sacrifice family, the comforts and sweets of life, all worldly relations and the love of the world, for the salvation of the country. If the salvation of the fatherland cannot be gained, then those who follow me must look upon death with affection as the greatest boon. I ask your forgiveness for reminding you of what high-minded self-sacrifice is demanded of those who will advance in the van of the forces of liberty; for, knowing you as I do, I do not imagine that there is one among you who will shirk his duty. I will explain to you our purpose. You know that the intervention of Europe in our internal affairs was brought about by the complaints of the Christians, who suffered less than did we Moslems under the Despotism, and that

the Government has opened a road for this intervention by its despicableness and cowardice, making Turkey a byword among the nations for all that is bad. Now, in this revolution we have to make manifest to the world in a practical fashion that we love the Christians, as being our brethren under the same fatherland, that we hold them equal to ourselves, that we recognise the security of their honour as our honour, of their lives as our lives, of their property as our property. This revolt is not against individuals, but against the system of government, which has not only stirred up strife between the different creeds and races, but has also made us Moslems the enemies of each other. This is a revolt in the name of liberty, equality and brotherhood. To bring justice to the people we will traverse the mountains until we have sacrificed our lives. I am sending to Monastir my wife (Niazi had been married but nine months and was very attached to his wife), and my sister with her fatherless children, for they have none but me to take care of them; and there my relatives will protect them. I will bid an everlasting farewell to these dear ones, and I will shut up my house. Are there any among you who will follow me heart and soul?"

Then all those present with one voice replied: "We look to dying with you in honour and felicity. We are all ready." The following Friday was fixed upon as the date of the rising of

the people of Resna, and it was agreed that on that day, at the hour of morning prayer, the band of two hundred patriots should assemble near the barracks. Jemal Effendi was sent to Monastir to apprise the central Committee in that town of Niazi's plan and to obtain permission to carry it out. Then the brethren, having embraced one another, with tears of joy and pride in their eyes, broke up the meeting, departing in twos and threes so as not to attract the notice of the spies.

Within two days Jemal returned from Monastir with the required permission from the central Committee, and Niazi made all preparations for the fateful Friday. As he was thus engaged, an incident occurred which, in his opinion, to no small extent favoured the fortunes of his adventure. There came to appeal to him, with lamentations and tears, the sister of the famous Bulgarian revolutionary leader, Christe. A Servian band, which had recently killed a member of her family, had now carried off into the mountains the child of this poor woman, and demanded impossible ransom. Niazi swore to the woman that he would rescue the child for her, and he decided to take into the mountains with him the Servian school-master of Resna as a hostage. Niazi's success in recovering the child shortly afterwards went a long way towards gaining the confidence of the Bulgarians and convincing them

of the good intentions of those who served the Committee of Union and Progress.

The night that preceded the going forth of the band was spent by Niazi in writing various manifestos and letters, which it was his purpose to send out when he was clear of the town and out of the power of the agents of the Government. In a manifesto which he addressed to the Chief Secretary of the Imperial Palace; to Hilmi Pasha, the Inspector-General at Salonica (the present Grand Vizier); and to the Vali of Monastir, he explained that the Committee of Union and Progress represented the whole nation and was very powerful; that its aim was to obtain a just form of government, like that in civilised countries, and to preserve the integrity of the Empire. He stated that, in view of the number of spies who had been sent by the Government to Salonica to destroy those who were silently working for their country's good, the Committee had taken measures to protect the patriots; that on that day two hundred *fedais* (devoted ones), armed with mauser rifles, under three officers, were marching from Resna; that elsewhere other bands were being formed, representing all the elements of the population, and that these bands would inflict punishment on the traitorous spies who disgraced the army to which they belonged. The Committee demanded that the spying Pashas and their assistants should be at once sent back to

Constantinople by special train. It also demanded that the Fundamental Law (the Constitution) should be restored immediately, and that the Chamber of Deputies should assemble as soon as it was possible. If the Government refused to grant these requests, then the nation would obtain by force what it required, and the responsibility for the bloodshed would rest with the high dignitaries of the State.

Then he wrote letters to the commander of the regiment of gendarmes at Monastir, to the lieutenant of gendarmerie at Resna, and to certain other officers who had sold themselves to the Palace, and solemnly warned them, in the name of the two hundred *fedais* of the Committee of Union and Progress, that if they continued to disgrace their military uniform by acting as spies over their comrades, and by showing themselves the sycophants of the Government and the foreign officers, thereby betraying their fatherland which was agonising "like a sorely wounded lion;" and that if they did not at once reform their conduct and cease to be the active enemies of the National Union, death would be the punishment awarded to them by the Committee. Men had already discovered that the Committee never uttered idle threats, and the recipient of one of these letters was so terrified that he became insane.

The momentous day (July 3, 1908) dawned, and Niazi Bey was up betimes to complete his

preparations. For his band to march out of Resna while the officers who were not adherents of the cause and the considerable garrison remained in it was, of course, out of the question, so he employed a ruse to empty the town of those who might oppose him. By prearrangement some members of the Committee came into Resna and reported that a Bulgarian band was moving up the road near Ismilova, that is, in a direction contrary to the one in which he intended to lead his own followers; and some rifles were fired in the hills to support the story. Thanks to this scheme, all the available troops were hurried off to attack this imaginary band, leaving but a few officers and men to guard the barracks, which are situated on a height overlooking the town and about a mile and a half distant from it.

Niazi then walked to the barracks in his uniform, while the members of his band in twos and threes collected in the neighbourhood. He passed through the gates of the barracks just after the Moslem officials and inhabitants of Resna had entered the mosques for the Friday midday prayer; he made the appointed signal with his sword, and his *fedais*, to the number of one hundred and fifty, poured into the barracks, arousing no suspicion among the soldiers on guard, who were led to understand that Major Niazi Bey was arming a party of Moslem civilians

MAJOR NIAZI BEY. The young officer who first raised the standard of revolt at Resna and became one of the chief leaders of the Revolutionary Forces. When the counter-revolution placed the capital at the mercy of the Reactionaries in April, 1909, Niazi led a force of regular troops and volunteers to join the Constitutional Army that invested Constantinople to restore the supremacy of the Constitutional



with the object of proceeding to the scene of action to co-operate with the troops.

Following Niazi Bey's instructions, the *fedais* broke open the rifle and ammunition cases and armed themselves, many of the men taking two rifles each, so that those who joined the band later on might be provided with weapons. Niazi also opened the military chest and took all the money that was in it, amounting to about £500, making out a receipt for it in which he explained for what purpose he was about to use it. Then the band, in perfect order and full of enthusiasm, marched out of the barracks, and with it went nine private soldiers who, being still under the impression that Niazi was leading a detachment against the Bulgarians, had volunteered their services. After marching for two hours they came to cross roads on the summit of a grassy down, where Niazi's band was joined, as had been arranged, by Lieutenant Osman Effendi and his detachment of *fedais* from Persepe, consisting of a lieutenant, four soldiers, and thirty civilians.

Here a halt was called for rest and food, and before the march was resumed Niazi called the men around him and addressed them, explaining his aims and the strict rules of discipline which the Committee had enjoined him to enforce. He reminded them that they had sworn upon the Unity of God to devote their lives to the salvation of their fatherland. "The nation expects you,"

he said, "to set a brilliant example of self-sacrifice and Ottoman chivalry worthy to be imitated. Are you prepared never to see your homes again until the salvation of the country has been secured, and willingly to die for her?" His followers cried, out "Yes, yes; it shall be death or salvation." Then Niazi proceeded, "There may be some among you who have not the physical strength to live the hard life that is before us, to support the long marches on foot, thirst, hunger, nakedness, heat and cold. If there be such I give them full permission to retire; let them go back to their villages and pray for us." As there was no reply to this, he went on to speak of the very lofty sense of duty and the strict rules of conduct that should govern the *fedais*, who, having bid farewell to life, were now ready to sacrifice themselves for the fatherland. Their enemies were many, and would certainly slander them; but it behoved them so to act that none could look askance at them with good reason. It was for them to exemplify by the righteousness of their lives what was meant by "the exaltation of the glory of Islam and the Ottomans, through obedience to the Sacred Law of Mohammed which was the basis of the Constitution." The Constitution was to bring equality and justice to all Ottomans without distinction of race and religion. They, as the apostles of the Constitution, must exemplify this equality

and justice. It behoved them, while the band wandered over the country, to regard the honour of the inhabitants as their own honour, to be kindly in their dealings with them, to be guilty of no act of oppression, to thieve nothing, though urged by the pangs of hunger, and above all things to respect all the women of the country and to observe chastity. He explained that he would punish, without exception, any of his followers who in the above respects was a wrong-doer even in the slightest degree, and that the one penalty that he would inflict would be that of death; for the safety of the fatherland necessitated this severity. He told them that he had taken measures to provide for their immediate needs. He would give each man three Turkish pounds for the support of his family and two silver medjidiehs for his tobacco, and he undertook to procure food and clothes for them. "These are the stringent conditions of service," he concluded. "Do you approve of them? If so, swear by the Unity of God that you accept them from your heart and soul."

In reply, the *fedais* raised an enthusiastic cry of "*Wallahi, billahi*" (in the name of God, yes!).

Of the nine private soldiers who had marched from Resna under the belief that they were being led against the Bulgarians, four now asked permission to return. Niazi took their arms and sent them back to the officer commanding the

battalion of chasseurs at Resna, with a letter in which he explained that the men were in no wise to blame, as they had been deceived by himself. Of the civilians who had joined the band only one displayed timidity at this last moment, so Niazi allowed him to return to his home and entrusted the man with the letters and manifestos which he, Niazi, had written during the previous night, instructing him to deliver them to the *mudir* of the district; and to the *mudir* he sent a separate letter, ordering him, with threats, to forward these documents to the various people to whom they were addressed.

Then the bugle sounded and the little band of zealots marched on again through the beautiful Balkan countryside, in the glorious summer weather, to their unknown destiny—a band of sworn ascetics who harmed no men save the agents of the Despotism who stood in their way, and these they slew without pity; to all others they were as brothers, protecting the weak and oppressed of whatsoever race or creed, preaching the gospel of justice and equality.

The bands of the racial propaganda that had hitherto passed through the Balkans had terrorised the population with murder, robbery, and the violation of women, whereas this band gained the confidence of all and was welcomed in the villages. This was indeed as a company of knight-errants, but these were no visionaries tilting at windmills;

the aim of the *fedais* was the overthrow of the reign of tyranny and corruption; Niazi's bands and the other bands of the Committee of Union and Progress which followed its example, actually succeeded, as we shall see, not only in winning over the entire Moslem population of this region to the cause, but in uniting the various races that had been cutting each other's throats for years, so that the whole strength of the Macedonian peoples was brought together to oppose the Despotism.

CHAPTER XI

Shemshi Pasha's attempts to destroy Niazi's band—The Committee's action—Niazi's progress through the Dibra district—His proclamation to the Bulgarians—Enver Bey takes to the mountains—The killing of Shemshi Pasha.

WITHIN a few hours of the departure of Niazi Bey and his band from Resna, the officials of the Yildiz had been informed by telegraph of the outbreak of the insurrection. After a consultation of the Sultan's advisers a telegram was sent to General Shemshi Pasha, then in command at Mitrovitza in the northern Vilayet—who was, as I have explained in a former chapter, a trusted officer, than whom none had greater experience in crushing revolt in Macedonia and Albania—recounting to him what had occurred, and ordering him with the least possible delay to move the necessary troops from Mitrovitza to Monastir, and to raise volunteers from among the people, "so as to surround and seize the ungrateful traitor Niazi, together with the officers, officials, private soldiers and civilians who are his companions." The General was further informed that his Majesty expected him to prove his fidelity and loyalty by making these wicked men a telling example to other seditious persons, and

relied upon him to cleanse that portion of the Empire of this mischief and to prevent its spread by measures of the severest nature.

The ill-fated Shemshi displayed his loyalty and zeal by working night and day to compass the destruction of Niazi and his band of *fedais*. On July 6 he arrived with two battalions at Monastir by special train; another battalion was closely following, and seven other battalions were marching into the disturbed districts. The usual trickery of which the creatures of the Palace were so fond, was also employed to support the operations of the troops. Thus, in order to excite Moslem fanaticism and persuade men to serve as volunteers, it was assiduously rumoured that the Christians were rising to massacre the Mussulmans, a falsehood that produced but little effect; while delegates were sent through the villages to tell the people that the Constitution desired by the Committee of Union and Progress and advocated by the bands under Niazi and others, was opposed to the religion of Islam, "its doctrines being as vile as that which permits women to go about unveiled." The Palace also arranged with the local officials that attempts should be made to corrupt the members of Niazi's band, rank and money being offered to any of these who would kill him.

In the telegrams in which he reported progress to the Palace, Shemshi stated that he was unable

to obtain any reliable information concerning the rebels from either the military authorities or the Vali, and that no one could tell him where the Committee of Union and Progress was, or the names of its members. All that his spies had been able to discover was that the heads of the people in those parts were full of seditious ideas and that many men of importance were on the Committee; the movement was evidently spreading, and Staff-Major Enver Bey had abandoned his uniform and gone off to join the seditious Committee. Nevertheless, he, Shemshi Pasha, assured his Majesty the Caliph that he would exert himself until he breathed his last breath (words the literal truth of which were soon to be proved) to root up this seditious growth. He, moreover, reported that he had sent messages to the Albanian notables, and that thousands of brave Albanians were prepared, in answer to his call, to pour into the disaffected districts and punish these people who were unfaithful to their religion and traitors to their sovereign. He also announced that two battalions would at once march in the direction of Resna, and that he was confident of his speedy success in stifling the conspiracy.

His confidence was misplaced, for of the Albanian chiefs upon whose help he relied the greater number had become adherents of the Committee of Union and Progress, while all

the officers and non-commissioned officers of one of the two battalions which he was sending to surround Niazi had sworn the oath of fidelity to the Committee. But Shemshi had his doubts; for he confessed to the notables of Monastir that the Rumelian troops which he had brought with him were not of much account, and that he was anxiously awaiting the arrival of an entire division of Anatolian troops which the Government was sending to him from Asia Minor. Shemshi's own brother-in-law, an officer of gendarmerie in Monastir, and a member of the Committee, while unable, of course, to take him into his confidence, attempted to prevent a useless shedding of Moslem blood and to save the General's own life, by warning him that the troops of Resna and its neighbourhood would refuse to obey his orders if they were called upon to fire on Niazi's band. In the meanwhile the Committee of Union and Progress had full knowledge of all the plans of the Government; for telegraph clerks and other officials who were secret adherents of the cause were able to betray the communications that passed between the Yildiz and the military authorities in Monastir.

The Committee was actively employed in frustrating the plans of the Government. In order to counteract the influence of the false reports that had been circulated by the agents of the Despotism it placarded the walls of

Monastir with manifestoes on the night before Shemshi's arrival. These manifestoes explained that the aim of the Committee was to free Turkey from her traitorous Government which had been corrupting the nation for thirty years and was now betraying her to foreigners. It called for the immediate removal of the spies who had been sent recently from Constantinople, and protested against the illegal carrying off of the people denounced by the spies, to the Inquisitions of the Yildiz and the Central Police in the capital.

The Committee also organised numerous bands in various parts of the country so as to confuse the Government, divide its forces and prevent a concentrated attack on Niazi. It kept up constant communication with Niazi, keeping him well informed of the movements of his enemies. The Committee enjoined him to avoid coming into contact with the troops that had been sent against him, but if this became impossible, to force on a decisive action that would do the Government great damage. As the object of the Committee was to unite all the different elements of the Ottoman population, a civil war, at this juncture, especially if it took the form of a conflict between the Moslem soldiery and the Moslem peasantry, would obviously be a deplorable calamity. But there was to be no sparing of the Government spies; and the Committee

gave orders that the Palace agents, who were wandering through the villages gaining information and poisoning the minds of the people against the Constitution, should be put to death.

And now to return to Niazi Bey and his wanderings. After his halt on the afternoon of his departure at the cross roads, where his band, reinforced by Osman Effendi's contingent of *fedais* from Persepe, had attained the strength which he considered to be the most suitable for his purpose, the march was continued to the Moslem village of Labcha, to most of whose inhabitants he and his followers were well known. The *fedais* entered the village shouting *Allahu Akber*, "God is very great," and *La ilaha illallah*, "there is no God but God!" Then Niazi, through the Elective Council of the village, called in all the peasants who were working in the fields and addressed them. Here the ground had been well prepared. There were none among the inhabitants who did not desire the restoration of the Constitution. They fell upon the necks of Niazi and his men and embraced them, rejoicing to see that these saviours of the country were now openly working for the cause.

Here one of the elders of the village, an ex-sergeant of the army, begged to be allowed to join the band. "Do not deprive me of this happiness," he said; "for even if we fail, true

martyrdom can be gained on this expedition." But Niazi replied, "My heart wants you with me, but you must stay here, for this village needs your presence. I intend to make Labcha my principal base and our place of refuge, so here you can help the cause more than by following me." The sergeant therefore remained in Labcha, where his zeal, fidelity and mother wit were of great service. An incident which occurred in this village some time later throws a curious light on the system of self-government which was introduced by the Committee of Union and Progress into the villages that had accepted the Committee as their virtual ruler. The sister of the above-mentioned sergeant had told her husband, a man of Resna, what she knew concerning the oath which the representatives of the Committee had administered to certain leading inhabitants of Labcha; and this foolish fellow had gone about boasting that he was in possession of the secret, mentioning the names of initiates. The sergeant, on hearing this, summoned the villagers to a meeting at which it was decided that, as a punishment for both these babblers, the man should immediately divorce his wife. The husband and wife came before this irregular tribunal, whose orders had to be obeyed more implicitly than those of the law courts of the State, and on begging for forgiveness obtained the revocation of the sentence that would have

separated them. This event led to the creation of a female police or vigilance committee in this and some other villages, whose chief duty it apparently was to check indiscreet gossip concerning the Committee.

As in Labcha and the surrounding villages all the men were strong partisans of the Committee, there was no more work to be done here for Niazi's band, and therefore, after purchasing provisions and refreshing themselves, the *fedais* set out again to march through the night.

In the following afternoon they came to the neighbourhood of the Albanian town of Ochrida, where there were many Palace spies and a considerable garrison, so that it was not possible for the band to enter it; but there was also here an important branch of the Committee of Union and Progress, and a large proportion of the inhabitants were at heart adherents of the cause. So Niazi, leaving his band encamped in a cherry orchard in the hills, walked into the town under cover of the night. Major Eyoub Effendi and other members of the Committee, who were old friends of his, had a meeting with him at the house of one of the faithful, and welcomed him heartily. They told him that two detachments of troops had left Resna to surround his band. They sent up to his camp leather water bottles and other necessaries of which his men were in want, and gave him great encouragement. Here he took the oppor-

tunity of sending a manifesto to the Albanian Committee, as it turned out later, with excellent result, for Niazi, whose birth-place was near the Albanian border, and who was himself of Albanian stock, had many friends among the Albanians, and was much respected by them. He also wrote a letter to his old foe Cherchis, the famous leader of Bulgarian bands. In this letter he explained his aim to Cherchis, and told him that he, Niazi, who had formerly pursued Cherchis' band with such vigour, now extended to him the hand of friendship, and asked for an interview under any conditions that Cherchis might propose, in order that they might devise a scheme for concerted action against the Government, and he reminded him of the proverb which says, "the sheep who leaves the flock is torn by the wolf." Niazi's friends took him back to his camp by back lanes and paths, and the band, leaving this dangerous neighbourhood, made another long night march to the north, its objective being Dibra on the Black Drin, the centre of a district in which Niazi knew that he would find many adherents, and where the forests and rugged mountains afforded safe retreats and easily defensible positions.

And now Niazi's work of preparing a general insurrection commenced in earnest. The story of his wanderings cannot be fully told here, but I will give some explanation of the methods he

employed. It was his intention, in the first place, to carry on his operations in the Moslem villages and afterwards to bring in the other elements of the population. He worked with the greatest energy, often visiting and organising several villages in the same day. It was his custom to send a small advanced party of his followers under an officer to reassure the people, and, this done, he would enter the village with the rest of the band. In all save a very few Moslem villages thus visited the *fedais* were received with extraordinary enthusiasm, and Niazi's task of making the inhabitants sworn adherents of the Committee was not difficult. He would call a meeting of the villagers, or, having attended prayers in the mosque with his band, he would there, after the prayers were over, address those present with stirring words, explaining to them the lofty aims of the movement whose soldier he now was. The leading men would be called up one by one to take the oath prescribed by the Committee of Union and Progress, and afterwards the other inhabitants would come up eagerly to be sworn in. Among those who thus became adherents of the Committee were many deserters from the army who had been hiding among their families.

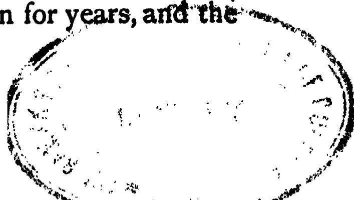
Niazi used to impress it upon these newly made members that, as they were now united as brethren to serve the same high purpose, they must put away all differences among themselves,

and forgive each other for wrongs inflicted. The cause demanded that their blood feuds should cease. Throughout this region, and especially in some of the Albanian districts, relentless blood feuds between families and individuals are very frequent, and to be murdered in a vendetta is regarded as the natural ending to a man's life. But now was beheld the astonishing spectacle of a general reconciliation. Men whose families had been slaughtering each other for generations, embraced publicly, united by devotion to a common cause; and old men who had not dared to go outside their houses for years, because some ancient crime was yet unavenged, once more went forth freely and without fear.

The villagers, in the sincerity of their welcome to Niazi's *fedais*, whom they regarded as the saviours of Turkey, often refused to accept payment for the food and other necessaries which they freely and gladly supplied to the band; but Niazi, when he did not pay in cash for these supplies, insisted on giving receipts for their value, and instructed the villagers to show their receipts to the authorities and deduct the amounts from the taxes which they paid to the Government. At the same time he used to send manifestoes to the local *mudirs* and other officials, warning them that death would be the penalty for the tax collector who refused to accept these receipts as part payment of taxes.

A village, after its inhabitants had been sworn in, was "organised" according to certain rules laid down by the Committee, and became a well-ordered centre of revolt. In the first place the authority of the Government and its officials was disclaimed, and tyrannical oppression was prevented by the united opposition of a population that had become as a band of brothers. A local form of government on constitutional lines was set up. The sources of the Government revenue were appropriated whenever it was possible to do this, and in some districts the villages refused to pay any taxes to the Government, offering a passive resistance that would have taken an active shape had the tax collectors ventured to push the matter.

For the purpose of mutual protection, relations were established between the various villages of a district; and a certain number of the inhabitants were secretly organised as a sort of militia. Niazi found that from one hundred to two hundred and fifty rifles were concealed in each village of the Dibra and other neighbouring districts, so arms were not wanting. These villages had suffered greatly from the raids of the Bulgarian bands, but from this time the organisation introduced by Niazi enabled them not only to hold their own against the largest bands, but to defy the attempts of the Government to coerce them. This general preparation for defence brought a peace to this region such as it had not known for years, and the



Moslems themselves, obeying the orders of the Committee, refrained from any aggressive actions; all the Moslem bands that were in the hills were dissolved, the men who composed them returning to their villages. Niazi made it clear to all adherents of the Committee that it was above all things necessary for the success of the cause that the Moslems should carefully avoid any conflict, whether with Christian bands or Government troops, and that they should act strictly on the defensive until the Committee gave the word for the general insurrection.

Niazi thus succeeded, whithersoever he wandered over the Balkans, in winning over the Mussulman landowners and peasantry, and many of the Government officials, to the revolutionary cause; and, in the meanwhile, by manifestoes and letters he sought to gain the confidence and support of the Bulgarian element in the population. Notwithstanding the never-ceasing warfare between them in Macedonia, the Turks and the brave and manly Bulgarians were more in touch with each other than with any of the other races in the Balkan Peninsula. The Turks had often protected and were soon again to protect the Bulgarian exarchists against the fanatical persecutions of the Greeks. It was, therefore, natural that Niazi should seek the co-operation of the Bulgarians before approaching the other Christian peoples of European Turkey.

There are many Bulgarian villages scattered over the region in which Niazi was at work, and their inhabitants at first regarded with some anxiety the change that had come over the Moslem population, which for several years had appeared listless and devoid of hope, not having the separatist aspirations which buoyed up the spirits of the Christians, but now had suddenly become cheerful and alert, as if looking forward to some great and happy change. Suspicious at first, the Bulgarians at last came to realise that whatever sentiment was stirring the Moslems, it had nothing to do with anti-Christian feeling, and was not antagonistic to themselves.

On July 6, Niazi issued his important manifesto to the Bulgarians. He proclaimed to them that the time had come to strike a blow at the evils that had been destroying the fatherland for years, for the Despotism was ever becoming more intolerable. He put all the blame on the Government; but pointed out that the Christian Ottomans had taken a wrong road, while seeking a better state of things. They had heeded the false advice of the surrounding small states, Bulgaria, Servia and Greece, which had promised to free Macedonia, but were really working for their own ends, their one aim being to seize the country and enslave its people. "These little Powers have sown hatred and dissension among us, and have deluged the fatherland with blood."

He assured them that "if these little Powers should work on thus for another thirty years they would not attain their purpose. The fatherland is, and ever shall be, ours." He then went on to explain that the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress, consisting of army officers, civil officials, townsmen and peasants, all honourable men, had been formed with the object of establishing a system of government that would give liberty and justice, without distinction of creed or race, to all Ottomans, so that they might live in peace and happiness in their common fatherland. Then he spoke of his band of armed *fedais*, whose mission it was to propagate these principles in the towns and villages, and to bring about the co-operation of all elements of the population in putting a stop to the internal dissensions and civil warfare that were hastening the Empire to its ruin. He called upon the leaders to dissolve these mischievous bands, to join his own band, and work for Ottoman liberty and justice, instead of for Bulgaria and the other little Powers. Severe punishment would be dealt out to such bands as did not come in, and if any village gave encouragement to the bands after this warning, its head man would be executed. They were all Ottomans, and they must all co-operate to establish the Constitution which gave equality and liberty, and protected each creed and race and language.

This manifesto produced a wonderful effect. The Bulgarian inhabitants knew that Niazi Bey was not speaking idle words, and threatening to do things that he could not carry out. They realised that if it came to civil war the Committee of Union and Progress would have practically the entire Moslem population of Macedonia and Albania on its side. Moreover, they knew enough of Niazi to feel that he was quite sincere in his declarations and promises, and many of them had observed with amazed admiration the just and honourable conduct of his band of *fedais*. Here was the Turkish officer who, for five years, had been vigorously hunting down the Bulgarian bands, now speaking to them as fellow-countrymen and brethren! Hitherto, they argued, they had paid heavy taxes to a Government that had given no account of how the money was spent, and treated them as dogs; but now a new rule was asserting itself, under which they began to see justice and the prospect of being treated as human beings.

So within a few days of the issue of his manifesto, Niazi received intelligence to the effect that the Bulgarians of Resna, Ochrida, Persepe, and other districts, had held meetings at which it had been decided that "it would be an honour to serve with their lives and property this band which had such high aims." Cherchis himself, too, with his comrades, desired to effect

a union with the Committee of Union and Progress.

On July 9, Niazi, thinking that the time was ripe, for the first time brought his band into a purely Bulgarian village. This was the large village of Velijon, containing three hundred and fifty houses. It is situated on a hillside, with a great forest behind it sloping up steeply to the wild and lofty ridges of the Balkan range, and for its strategic advantages it had been selected as one of the most important supply bases for the Bulgarian bands. As Niazi's vanguard entered the village the inhabitants took alarm, closed their shops, and shut themselves up within their houses; but after Niazi, coming in with the rest of his band, had summoned the Elective Council, and explained matters, the fears of the villagers disappeared; and friendly relations were soon established by the kindly and courteous officers and Moslem notables who composed the bulk of this remarkable band. The end of it was that the priest, the Elective Council, and all the other inhabitants of the village placed their hands upon the Holy Gospels and took the oath of fidelity to the Committee, undertaking to carry out all its orders and render armed assistance to the cause when called upon to do so. When the band marched out of the village in the cool of the evening the friendly Christians accompanied the *fedais* for some distance to put them on their way

and then bade them God speed. Shortly after this Niazi was enabled to amnesty and arrange for the coming in of the bands that were in the hills round Dibra, which place was made an important centre of the insurrectionary movement.

It was about this time that Niazi received a letter from the Monastir Centre of the Committee which gave him great encouragement. It thanked him and "the heroic self-sacrificing men of Resna" for the splendid work they were doing, and informed Niazi that his friend, Major Enver Bey, the clever staff officer who had performed distinguished service in Macedonia, had thrown up his commission, and at the head of a band of *fedais* was actively preparing the population in the Tikosh district, while other officers had also organised bands, and taken to the mountains. The fortunes of the cause appeared very bright.

He also learnt from this letter that General Shemshi Pasha had been publicly assassinated in Monastir on July 7. The General, after reporting progress to the Palace, had left the telegraph office and was driving in his carriage to join the two battalions with which it was his intention to surround Niazi's band, when he was shot dead by an officer in uniform. Fifteen hundred people were surrounding the carriage at the time, but not one attempted to, or had any wish to arrest this executioner of the Committee's will, who strolled quietly off. The ill-fated Shemshi was an ener-

getic commander, and had he lived there would undoubtedly have been some severe fighting between such troops as would have remained loyal to him and the Committee's bands. Shemshi would probably have led his troops to disaster, for his boldness and confidence in himself amounted to rashness, and he despised his enemy. Ambushes had been prepared for him on the roads by which he would have had to march ; and Niazi, operating in a difficult mountain country, with an armed population skilled in guerilla war to stand by him, was now in a position to hold his own for an indefinite time against any forces that the Government could send against him. There can be little doubt that the death of Shemshi prevented a civil war that would have done much injury to the cause of the Committee, for it would have divided public opinion, the unanimity of which it was of such importance to secure. From the date of Shemshi's death the impotence of the Government and the disorganisation of the army made it difficult for the Palace to plunge the country into the horrors of internecine conflict.

CHAPTER XII

The success of the bands—The Albanians support the Committee—Friendly attitude of the Bulgarians—Final efforts of the Despotism—Anatolian troops are sent to crush the insurrection—The Vali of Monastir warns the Palace—The Palace intrigues with the Greeks—The Committee's proclamation to the Greeks.

THE preparations for the general rising now advanced very rapidly. Enver Bey, declining further treacherous offers, which included the promise of his promotion to General rank if he would return to Constantinople, led his band of *fedais* through the mountains, and won village after village to the revolutionary cause. The story of this young officer's escape in disguise from Salonica, his adventures in the wilds, and the brave work he did for Turkey, is told throughout his country. He has become the popular hero, and is held in the highest estimation by his comrades; for the complete absence of any jealousy among the young officers who devoted themselves to the liberation of their fatherland is a pleasing feature of this patriotic movement. Niazi writes of Enver as follows: "He who in the time of sorrow and hopelessness encouraged and fortified us with his ardent words and serious

ways, Enver Bey, whose like is seldom to be met." Salah-ed-Din Bey, Hassan Bey, and other officers were also wandering over Macedonia and Albania with their bands, gaining thousands of adherents among the landowners and the peasantry; and at the same time others were educating the rank and file of the army, with the result that a large proportion of the troops garrisoning this region were ready to fight, even against their own comrades, if called upon to do so.

Niazi Bey had practically won over the bulk of the Moslem inhabitants of Western Albania, a wonderful achievement indeed. For one who knows these fanatical Albanian tribesmen finds it difficult to understand how they could listen with sympathy and patience to the gospel of universal brotherhood, and the extension of equal rights to Christian and Mussulman. But Niazi, with his rough, strong eloquence, his obvious sincerity and single-mindedness, his magnetic personality, and his commanding presence—for, like many Albanians, he is a man of great stature and sturdy build—is evidently a born leader of men; and he was successful not only in gaining over the Albanians, but in holding back these eager warriors until their armed assistance should be called for, and in making them patch up their sanguinary tribal and family blood feuds, some of which had endured for centuries. Moreover, a large proportion of the young officers of the

Third Army Corps were of Albanian stock, and of these several were able to influence their countrymen in the Committee's favour.

Niazi and his band, during their memorable twenty days' wandering in the hill-country, avoiding the main roads, and threading in single file the difficult mountain tracks, ran many dangers, and suffered considerable hardships. At times the pursuing Government troops were close at their heels; sometimes, but not often, the *fedais* came to a village whose inhabitants were hostile. Thus, on one occasion, when hungry, thirsty, and weary they approached a village in order to obtain the bread and cheese and water which seem to have composed their usual diet, the villagers, whose minds had been poisoned against the Committee by an emissary of the Palace, came out armed to the teeth, and dangerously excited, and threatened to fire upon the band. The position was an awkward one, for Niazi not only had the hostile village in front of him, but had in his rear, and not far off, a large detachment of troops under a Bosnian officer, which had been sent to cut him off. So the band, foodless and worn out with fatigue, had to take to the upper slopes of the mountain for safety. Niazi is an obstinate man. He was determined either to convert that village to the cause or to give it a severe lesson. A few days later he talked the villagers over to repentance of their error; they

took the oath of allegiance to the Committee, and supplied the band with two days' rations of bread and cheese, for which they refused to accept payment. Moreover, the Bosnian officer, on receiving the news of Shemshi Pasha's execution at Monastir, abandoned his pursuit of Niazi and marched with his band to Ochrida to submit to the Committee.

On July 12, Niazi, having been summoned to Ochrida to confer with the Committee, marched boldly into that town with his band, none daring to interfere with him, so much had the authority of the Government been weakened by this time. Here the members of the Committee gave him information concerning the other bands, and instructed him to keep in touch with them, as the time was near when an important combined movement might be made. They told him that the Government had sent General Osman Pasha to Monastir as Commander Extraordinary of the Vilayet, in the place of the assassinated Shemshi Pasha, and that the Bulgarian Executive Committee had issued instructions to all the Bulgarian villages to the effect that the Moslem revolutionary bands should be treated hospitably and with consideration, but that, until further orders, armed assistance must not be given. Niazi was also informed of the shooting, by order of the Committee, of the *imam*, Mustapha Effendi, and other dangerous agents of the Palace.

The business completed, Niazi's band marched out of the town, and followed the sandy shores of the great lake of Ochrida, where they were warmly welcomed in the villages of the Bulgarian fishing-folk. The objective of the band was Istarova, but on the way they carried out their mission in the villages, swearing in the people, overthrowing the authority of the Government, establishing elective administrative bodies, and expelling any tax-gatherers or other servants of the Government who had oppressed the people, or were known to be subservient to Palace influence. Threatened at one point by a pursuing detachment of four hundred men, Niazi divided his band into small parties and took up commanding positions on the rocky hills that bordered the main road. But it turned out that the detachment was under the command of Captain Ziya Bey, a young officer whose sympathies were with the revolutionaries. Ziya Bey and some other officers came up to Niazi's camp, offered to join the band so soon as their services should be needed, and undertook to withdraw the detachment from the neighbourhood. There was another detachment, too, in pursuit of the band at that time, but it had purposely been sent off in a wrong direction.

It was Niazi's intention to make Istarova, the centre of an important district, his head-quarters for a short while. His band made a triumphal

progress through the district. The villagers were all eager to be sworn as adherents of the Committee. In one village Niazi ordered the execution of a particularly iniquitous tax-gatherer (who succeeded in effecting his escape) and the man's rams were divided among the members of the band, who were thus enabled to enjoy a luxurious meal for a change. Before entering Istarova, Niazi sent a letter to the principal Government official in the place, the *kaimakan* (or administrator, of the *Caza*, or district of Istarova), an honourable young man who had exercised his authority with justice, and of whom the peasants in the district had spoken well to Niazi. It was a characteristic letter, in which Niazi, after explaining that all the inhabitants of the district, Moslem and Christian, had sworn to stand by the Committee, told him that though he entertained a great esteem for him as a just ruler of the people, at the same time he, Niazi, regretted that the *kaimakan* had shown negligence in one important particular; for in that large district there was not a single school. "The calamities of this nation," he went on, "are mainly due to the ignorance of the people," and he urged him to do his best to promote education.

On July 16 the band entered Istarova, where the men enjoyed a welcome and much-needed rest—the villagers supplying cigars and coffee to cheer them—and were able to sleep in un-

wonted security, surrounded by their friends; for in that district of a hundred villages, with a population of 30,000, all men were with the Committee of Union and Progress, while any troops that might have proved troublesome had been removed to a distance by arrangement with friendly officers. As for Niazi, he saw to the swearing in of the people of Istarova, and the election of the administrative body, and then he preached the gospel of the Constitution in the Mosque, and recommended the newly appointed administrative body to build schools, to educate the people, and to repair their mosques, and for this purpose, on behalf of his band, he subscribed the sum of two pounds. The *kaimakan* himself sought out Niazi in the night, and praised him to his face as a brave man and a bringer of justice to the people, declared his belief in the righteousness of the Committee's aim, and placed himself under Niazi's orders. Thus did Niazi influence all the men with whom he came into contact.

Throughout the following day Niazi remained in Istarova, which presented a very animated appearance, for there poured into the village thousands of peasants from all the surrounding countryside, eager to be sworn, together with a number of soldiers who had deserted to join Niazi, and had come in, bringing their rifles with them, from the neighbouring garrisons and posts. There was good reason for Niazi's exultation in

the success of the movement. Resna, Ochrida, Persepe, Dibra, Malisa, and now Istarova had all been brought within the revolutionary union by the efforts of the bands. He now knew that with a word, when the time came, he would be able to summon a large armed force to execute the Committee's will.

And now to leave the mountains and the bands of brave *fedaïs* for a while, to return to the less wholesome atmosphere of the Yildiz Palace, and follow the last vain efforts of the Despotism to crush the life out of the revolutionary movement. The advisers of the Sultan were fully aware of the significance of the reports that came to them from Macedonia, though the newspapers, officially inspired, still spoke lightly of "unimportant manifestations of disaffection in a few garrisons." There were high Government officials in the European Vilayets who ventured to inform the Palace of the exact state of affairs. Notable among these was the Vali of Monastir, who in the following despatch to the Grand Vizier (dated, I think, July 17) pointed out, as plainly as he dared, that the revolutionary movement was too strong for the Despotism, that further repressive measures must fail, and could only result in useless bloodshed, and that it would be well to submit to the will of the people and grant a Constitution. The last suggestion was, of course, put in an ambiguous way, for at that time no one

MAJOR ENVER BEY. The popular hero of the Revolution. In the Summer of 1908 he stirred the Macedonians to revolt and took a leading part in the overthrow of the despotism. In April, 1909, he left Berlin, where he was the Turkish Military Attaçhe, to join the loyal army that marched from Salonica to invest Constantinople, crush the counter-revolution, and restore the supremacy of the Constitutional cause. The words written by Enver Bey on this portrait signify : "A souvenir of friendship to Mr. Knight—from Major Enver Bey." Enver Bey, when asked in February last to suggest some sentiment which might be printed by the side of his portrait in this work, wrote down the following words : "An individual who glories that he belongs to that Ottoman Army which is the true defender of the freed Ottoman Nation against foes external and internal,"—significant words in view of recent events.



had the courage to mention the word Constitution to the Sultan. The following is a translation—some repetitions and unimportant details being omitted—of the despatch in question.

"It has been ordered by an Imperial *Irade* that Niazi Bey and his companions should be arrested. The existence of the powerful Committee of Union and Progress has been proved by the severity of the measures which it adopts. It stands not alone; for, as has already been intimated in official despatches, the officers of the army are united in a determination to support the demands of the Committee; and the population, likewise, is in league with the Committee. To leave aside the question of the pursuit of Niazi, I beg to state that none will now venture to undertake the duty of making investigations. The members of the commission which was formed under the presidency of Shukri Pasha to institute inquiries (the spy commission) have been obliged to abandon their work in consequence of the secret threats which were conveyed to them. The *ulema* who were sent by the Government to travel through the country and give advice to the villagers have been warned by the Committee of Union and Progress that they would be killed if they continued to do this, so they have returned. The lives of all officials, my own included, are in peril. It has been shown that the Committee has

the power of executing its threats. Here, in Monastir, when General Osman Hidayet Pasha had gathered his officers around him to read to them the telegram which communicated the high *Iradé* of his Imperial Majesty the Caliph, he was shot by one of the officers, who fired three times at him in the presence of all these people, and yet this officer was not arrested, and it has been found impossible even to ascertain his name. The police and judiciary officials are meditating resignation from their posts in order to save their lives if pressure is brought upon them to make them carry out their duties. As for me, your servant, my ancestry having been faithful for four hundred years, and myself having served the Government in various capacities for the last forty-four years, I consider that for me to resign my post in this hour of trouble would be an act of ingratitude; and therefore, despite the perils to which I and my family are exposed, I am prepared to discharge my duty, that is to devise means for preventing the active co-operation of the people with the officers of the army, whose views and aims they undoubtedly share.

"At the same time I consider it a duty and a proof of my loyalty that I should submit to you in detail the true facts of the situation. I must inform you that the sentiments of which I am speaking are now acquiring a strong hold upon the private soldiers. The six battalions which

were sent to Resna now remain there inactive, and their commanders confess their powerlessness. Should any attempt be made to pursue Niazi, the soldiers will refuse to fire upon him and his band. I may mention in proof of this that when General Shemshi Pasha was assassinated here, the men of his Albanian bodyguard, the gendarmes, and the other soldiers present, when pursuing the criminal in accordance with the orders given to them, discharged their rifles in the air and allowed the assassin to escape. According to private information which I have received it is believed that the troops who are to be despatched from Anatolia will, on their arrival here, refuse to use their arms against their comrades. What I have stated concerning the condition of this region is applicable also, so I am informed, to the Vilayets of Salonica and Kosovo.

"The urgency of this matter and the fact that this movement is daily gaining strength and spreading with extraordinary rapidity being taken into consideration by the Government, I submit, prompted by my loyalty, that the time for either measures of persuasion or those of force and severity have passed, and that, in order to obviate a still worse state of things, other more effective measures, more consonant with the times, should be adopted. I am awaiting your commands."

The plan of the Palace was to crush the revolt

with a great force of troops from Anatolia; but as straightforward methods by themselves never sufficed the Sultan's advisers, underground devices were also employed. The Greek element in Macedonia on previous occasions had been found willing to join hands with the Turkish Government in the suppression of Bulgarian rebellions, so Munir Pasha, who had for some years been the Turkish Ambassador in Paris, was now sent to Athens to arrange for the organisation of Greek bands to attack the Moslem and Christian supporters of the Committee of Union and Progress. The Palace also attempted, by offers of full pardons, gifts and promotions, to withdraw army officers from the revolutionary movement, and so leave the disorganised followers of the Committee of Union and Progress an easy prey for the forces that were to be brought against them. The thirty-eight young officers who had been arrested in Salonica and were imprisoned in the capital were released and pardoned. Thousands of officers in the army and navy were astonished to find themselves suddenly promoted, and decorations were distributed wholesale. The Palace entertained the foolish belief that every man has his price; but all this hypocritical benevolence was of no avail and only served to lay bare to the world the incompetence and panic of the Camarilla in the hour of danger.

It was decided to despatch no less than forty-

eight battalions from Anatolia to overpower the disaffected Macedonian army, and had these Asiatic troops proved staunch there would have been a terrible shedding of blood. Twenty-seven of these battalions were transported by sea from Smyrna to Salonica, where they disembarked on July 16. The efforts of Dr. Nazim Bey and other agents of the Young Turk party had already, to a large extent, inoculated these troops with the revolutionary doctrines before they left Asia Minor, and from the moment of their embarkation at Smyrna the emissaries of the Committee were at work among them, testing the officers to find out who were of the revolutionary party and using persuasive arguments with the rank and file. Some of the regiments on reaching Salonica refused to proceed to Monastir and were isolated from the rest. The remaining regiments were marched to Monastir, and with them went officers who were initiates of the secret society, disguised as sherbet sellers, *mollahs*, and so forth, ever winning over adherents to the cause. It soon became clear that the bulk of the officers and men of this force were in sympathy with the troops whom they had been sent to slaughter, and that they would never fire upon their comrades of the Third Army Corps. These battalions that entered Monastir were soon persuaded to take the oath of allegiance to the Committee of Union and Progress.

The state of affairs in the third week in July may therefore be summed up as follows: The Government still nominally ruled and administered the three Vilayets of Monastir, Salonica and Kosovo, but its authority had been reduced to impotence. In the chief military centre, Monastir, General Osman Pasha was in command, but, knowing the temper of his men, hesitated to attempt decisive action to crush the insurrection. The men of the Second and Third Army Corps, and of the regiments that had been brought from Anatolia, were either adherents of the Committee or wavering in their allegiance to the Government. It was unlikely that more than a small proportion of the troops would be found willing to fight the battles of the Palace. The Moslem and Bulgarian peasants, among whom arms had been distributed by the Committee of Union and Progress, were awaiting the word to take part in the general rising. Ten thousand Albanian warriors were in arms, eager to fall upon the supporters of the Despotism.

The one doubtful element of the population was the Greek. It appears that the Palace had not only sent Munir Pasha to Athens to seek the assistance of those intriguing subjects of King George who used to equip the brigand bands that had been the curse of Macedonia; but it also issued instructions to General Osman Pasha in Monastir to persuade the Greek bands within his

district, by means of what bribes or promises I cannot say, to hunt down and capture Niazi and the other leaders of the insurrection. It is undoubtedly the fact that the Greek bands, assisted by hired Mussulman desperadoes, were displaying great activity at this period, and that the Greek clergy were directing a vigorous persecution of the Bulgarian exarchists. The Committee of Union and Progress dealt firmly with this one disturbing element in an otherwise peaceful and united country. For example, the Committee carried away the Greek Bishop of Vodena as a hostage and let it be known that he would be put to death in three days unless by that time all the bands in that neighbourhood had been broken up.

On July 22, by which time, as I shall show, the young Turk leaders had come boldly into the open to demand from the Sultan his abdication or a Constitution, the Committee of Union and Progress in Monastir issued a manifesto, of which copies were sent to the Greek Committee in Athens, the spiritual head of the Greek community in Monastir, and to the chiefs of the various Greek bands in the neighbourhood.

This manifesto, after stating that "the Yildiz, in opposition to the will of the people, had attempted to bring about a diversion against the Young Turk movement by effecting a union between the Hellenes and the Patriarchate, and with that object had sent Munir Pasha to stir up

feeling in Greece against the Committee, and that this scheme had been attended with some success," proceeded as follows: "You know that our Committee of Union and Progress, having worked in secret for the welfare of all races and creeds in Turkey, has now come forth to openly proclaim its aim—the winning of liberty for the nation. The tyrannical Government has sown the seeds of sedition and has brought about conflicts and bloodshed between the various races and creeds in the land. We being all brothers, working together for the salvation and happiness of the country, ask of you, our Greek fellow-countrymen, that you no longer use differences of race and creed as an excuse for the shedding of blood. If your real object is to obtain equality, well-being, and liberty, be with us and seek no outside advice; be even as our Bulgarian brothers, who by their sincerity and by their deeds have proved their sympathy for our high aims. If you will not unite with us, we ask of you at least to remain neutral, and we call upon you in the name of humanity to cease this shedding of blood. We warn you against the dangers of Hellenism. If you Greeks in the Monastir Villayet do not put a stop to your Hellenic agitation, your brother Greeks in Anatolia, who are much more numerous than yourselves, will suffer as well as yourselves. Secret negotiations between the Yildiz and the Patriarchate will lead, not to your happiness, but

to your injury and destruction. We advise our Greek brothers not to be deceived by these shameless artifices which the Yildiz has oftentimes practised. We ask that the Greek bands should no longer go hither and thither shedding blood in their mistaken racial and religious zeal. Let the Hellenes among them return to their homes in Greece. Let them scatter. It is also intolerable to us that these bands have low Moslems in their pay who commit atrocities. We will find out and kill these Moslems if they do not at once abandon the Greek bands. We call upon you to have these Moslems sent away, else with you will be the responsibility for the blood that will be shed, and you will be condemned by the civilised world. With much affection we invite our Greek compatriots to unite with us in striving for our main objects—the restoration of our Constitution and the gaining of equality for all. We cannot doubt that God, who has created us all, will grant success to those only who work for humanity and civilisation."

CHAPTER XIII

Niazi is summoned to Ochrida—An important mission—The Committee decides to strike its blow—The gathering of the *fedais*—The march of the two thousand on Ochrida—A mascot—Monastir is captured by a night surprise—A bloodless victory—General Osman Pasha a prisoner of the Committee.

AND now the hour was drawing near when Niazi was to be called upon to do the deed that would bring the insurrection to a head and send the Despotism tumbling down like a house of cards. Leaving Istarova on July 17, Niazi and his band of *fedais* set out for Resna. After a fatiguing march across the mountains (in the course of which the provisional administration was introduced into several friendly Moslem and Christian villages, and some detours had to be made in order to avoid collision with a battalion of chasseurs, whose officers and men, being strangers to the country and not members of the Committee, were likely to be dangerous) the band entered Labcha, the first village, it will be remembered, that Niazi had visited and organised on the day of his setting out from Resna. Here, as in Istarova, the *fedais* were among staunch friends

and were enabled to sleep in security; there was no necessity for sending out patrols or for posting sentries, for these duties were performed by the villagers themselves, who were proud to guard the saviours of the nation as they rested. The village was also protected by a detachment of troops which, like many another little garrison in the three Vilayets, had mutinied, its officers and men becoming the sworn associates of the Committee.

On the following day, July 19, there was a great gathering of people in Labcha, wild hill-men, shepherds, deserters from the army and others, who had come in to see Niazi and his band and to declare their readiness to take up arms for the Committee. Niazi addressed the people, told them how successful had been the mission of his own and of the other bands, and assured them that the sand had all but run out of the glass, and the day was very near when the Despotism would fall and liberty prevail. That glad day was indeed nearer than Niazi himself imagined; for that very evening there came a messenger into the village with a letter for Niazi from the Ochrida Centre of the Committee of Union and Progress. In this letter the Committee informed him that very important and grave intelligence had been received from Monastir, and ordered him to set out at once for Ochrida. He was to leave his band outside that town and come

in alone to confer with the Committee and receive his instructions.

So soon as Niazi had read this letter he collected his men and made a forced march throughout the night, for all were eager to learn the nature of the duty which they were to be called upon to perform. Before dawn—July 20—the outskirts of Ochrida were reached, and Niazi, leaving his band, entered the town and went to the house of his brother, where the members of the Committee came to meet him. It was then explained to him that he and Eyoub Bey were to collect two thousand men from Ochrida and Resna, form them into two bands, and march on Monastir without delay. The detailed instructions as to what he was to do would be delivered to him before he reached that town.

As Niazi learnt later, the Committee of Union and Progress had decided that the time had arrived for it to make its great *coup*. The plan was simultaneously to proclaim the Constitution at Monastir and send an ultimatum to the Sultan, who would have to choose between constitutional government, abdication, and a bloody civil war. In the first place it was necessary for the Committee to secure the possession of Monastir, the headquarters of the Government's military strength in Macedonia, where General Osman Pasha, an able man who exercised a greater moral influence over his troops than did his

predecessor, Shemshi Pasha, was still in command. The bulk of the troops in Monastir were adherents of the Committee, but there were also many ready to obey the orders of the General. It was realised that if Osman Pasha could be got out of the way the supporters of the Government would be demoralised, and the Committee might then be able to establish its authority without bloodshed. The killing of each other by Turkey's Moslem soldiers was a calamity to be avoided. It was therefore decided to entrust to Niazi and Eyoub Beys the special duty of removing Osman Pasha from Monastir as suddenly and quietly as possible, so as to allow no time for the organisation of opposition.

To collect the necessary two thousand men was no difficult matter. In the first place it was decided to employ the very troops who had been the first to pursue Niazi and his band after the raising of the standard of revolt at Resna. This was a battalion of *redifs* of the Ochrida district which had been disbanded after its fruitless chase of the revolutionary leader, because the authorities rightly suspected that most of the men were adherents of the Committee of Union and Progress. So messengers were sent to the neighbouring villages to summon these disbanded soldiers—who had not yet given up their arms to the Government—to assemble at an appointed place outside Ochrida. Niazi with his band

marched into his own country to collect the men of Resna, Persepe and Labcha. Throughout the night of the 20th and throughout the following day he traversed the mountainous countryside, his band being ever increased by the accession of fresh volunteers who came to him generally in threes and fours, but occasionally in bodies of from forty to fifty men. Whenever the band passed through a village it was received with extraordinary enthusiasm, and the villagers brought presents of bread and cheese until each man was provided with two days' rations, the supply which Niazi deemed to be necessary.

In the morning of July 21 Eyoub Effendi, with his Ochrida band of disbanded *redifs* and others, a thousand men in all, joined Niazi's band at Labcha, and now the column formed by the two united bands set off in the direction of Monastir. After dark, as they were approaching their appointed night's halting place, an incident occurred which is interesting as illustrating the manners and customs of the wild Albanian hill-men. The stillness of the night was suddenly broken by the sound of rifle-fire on the mountain-side above the road; so Niazi sent out scouts to ascertain what was happening. It turned out that the Faragas and the Quapris, between which two tribes there had existed for ages a deadly blood feud, had each sent a band of about one hundred men to join Eyoub Bey's battalion; these two

bands met in the mountain, and what happened may be best described in Niazi's own words: "It was indeed a sight worth witnessing—this meeting of the men of these two tribes, between whom there had been so intense an enmity; but who were now united, as with one heart, ready to die together for the sake of the same ideal. These tribesmen, who for two centuries had hated to see each other's faces or to hear each other's voices, and who had ever pursued each other with rifle shots, had now, on meeting on the hillside saluted each other with rifle-shots, and were eager, standing together as comrades, to use rifle-shots against the traitors and enemies of the fatherland."

The column passed the night in the village of Gauchar, where many volunteers from the surrounding country joined the battalions of Niazi and Eyoub, bringing the force up to the strength of over two thousand men. The people gathered from the countryside to crowd the village streets throughout the night to honour and entertain the *fedais* with simple refreshments. All these people were prepared to risk everything in the civil war, the immediate outbreak of which they considered as inevitable.

On the following morning, July 22, the column marched under a blazing sun by the steep zigzag tracks that cross the precipitous ranges of Mount Pelista. At ten o'clock a halt was made, and the

"National Battalion of Ochrida" under Eyoub Bey, and the "National Battalion of Resna" under Niazi Bey, were arranged in their roll-call order. There were twenty companies or bands in all, under twenty commanders, who included among them one lieutenant-colonel, several majors and captains, one doctor of medicine, and leading Beys of the Macedonian and Albanian land-owning class. Up to that moment these National troops had not been informed of their destination or of the object of the expedition. So now, while Eyoub enlightened his battalion, Niazi addressed the men of his own command. He explained how, in order to serve the beneficent Committee which was working for the salvation of the country, the men of his band had cheerfully given up comfort, and their wives and families, and had been ready to sacrifice their lives. "But now," he said, "these hardships and troubles will soon be a thing of the past, and they have achieved their purpose well. Relying upon the success which God gives and the inspiration of the Prophet, we are now on our way to the headquarters of the Villayet of Monastir to carry into execution a most important command of the Committee. Within a few hours, if we are successful, we shall have delivered our country from its afflictions. Without hurting a hair of his head we shall take the Mushir (Field Marshal) Osman Pasha from his residence so as to prevent him from carrying into effect the

injuries which it is in his mind to inflict upon the Committee and the fatherland. May God enable us to perform this duty with complete success. It is therefore necessary, my comrades, that you should carry out the orders which you will receive, literally and implicitly. The strictest order and discipline must be maintained."

The men rejoiced to hear what they were called upon to do, and, despite their fatigue, when the order to resume the march was given, they proceeded along the rough roads at the double, eager to reach Monastir as soon as possible. While the column was on its way, there came to it a most acceptable mascot in the shape of a young roebuck. It was accompanying a half-dozen or so of bashi-bazouks, who had with them a letter from the Committee at Monastir ordering that they should be admitted into Niazi's band. They had found the roebuck in the hills, and as all Turks, even if they be savage bashi-bazouks, are fond of animals and are invariably kind to them, they caressed the creature and gained its confidence so well that it had followed them along the road. So this roebuck now became the pet of the column and marched at the head of it, fulfilling, says Niazi, the function of a guide, "for by some instinct it always ran on in the direction we had to go." Niazi's description of this incident well illustrates the kindly and religious sentiment of the Turks. "The soldiers," he tells us, "caressed

and blessed it, and thanked God who had sent us this beautiful animal, which fascinated all with its charming ways. We regarded its presence as a propitious sign, a divine message of approval of our enterprise."

In the evening, the column, after an extraordinary forced march, reached a village which was within a few miles of Monastir. A halt was called so that the men could have a meal and rest; and here, as had been arranged, there arrived from Monastir Lieutenant Osman Effendi with fifty men, bringing a sealed letter for Niazi which contained the Committee's detailed instructions for the execution of the plan. Once more Niazi impressed the necessity of silence, steadiness and obedience on the men; the order was given to march, and the eager *fedais* hurried along the road, sandal-shod, and therefore almost noiselessly, at the double, and covered the few miles that lay between them and their destination in a very short time. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and there were but few citizens in the streets when the column came to the outskirts of Monastir. Here the main body remained while eight hundred men, divided into several detachments, and guided by members of the Monastir Committee, passed into the town by various routes and quickly and silently approached and surrounded the group of buildings which contained the Government House, the Head-quarters of the

Commander-in-Chief, and the official residence of General Osman Pasha. At the same time agents of the Committee cut the telegraph wires and so prevented the General from holding any communication with the Yildiz or with his own staff. The sentries guarding the General's residence were quickly disarmed, only one man offered resistance, but he was pinioned before he could fire his rifle and give the alarm. Then two officers and some of the men of Niazi's band broke into the room where the General was in bed sleeping, and he was awakened, not unnaturally furiously angry, to find himself the prisoner of the revolutionaries. In the meanwhile other bodies of men discovered and placed under arrest the Chief of the Staff, the Officer in Command of the Zone, and some other officers who were known to be no friends of the Committee of Union and Progress.

His captors assured Osman Pasha that his life was in no danger, but, while addressing him with all the respect due to his high rank, they courteously explained to him that their instructions were to escort him with all marks of honour to Resna, where he was to remain for a short time as the guest of the Committee of Union and Progress. Then they handed him a letter which had been drawn up by the Committee. It opened with the correct ceremonial salutations: "In the name of the most merciful and compassionate

God. To His Excellency, Mushir, Osman Pasha. Peace be on you and the mercy of God. May God guide us and you." Then the letter proceeded—in terms so polite and flattering that one wonders whether the Committee was indulging in sarcasm—to point out that the courage and ability with which God had endowed His Excellency ought to be used to direct armies to crush the enemies of the fatherland, and not to attack the nation itself; but that, unfortunately, His Excellency's official appointment and the extensive powers and instructions that had been given to him by the Yildiz were calculated to induce him—no doubt against the dictates of his own conscience—to commit acts that might be injurious to the fatherland and cause the repetition of such regrettable events as occurred in Erzeroum (the Armenian massacres). His Excellency's life, the letter explained, was precious to the country; when the Despotism had been changed for constitutional government his services might be required for the reform and reorganisation of the army. Consequently the Committee proposed to rescue His Excellency from his present awkward situation, and ventured to beg him to consent to become the Committee's honoured guest; it trusted that he would not regard this as in any way bringing disgrace upon himself, and assured him that everything had been arranged that could safeguard his dignity and contribute to his comfort.

It reminded him that opposition to the Committee's will could not avail, for his house was surrounded, all officers on whose obedience he could rely were under arrest, while the troops in the town and all the inhabitants were adherents of the Committee.

Osman Pasha read this document without making any comment upon its contents, and asked whether he might go into the adjoining room to put on his clothes; but the two officers, fearing lest he might attempt suicide, were present while he dressed. Then the General left the house and, mounting a horse, was escorted by Niazi and his National Battalion of one thousand men to Resna, which was reached the following night, and here Osman was confined as an honoured prisoner in the house of one of the notables of the place.

On that day, July 23, Macedonia and Albania threw off the Despotism, and even as Niazi's men were marching to Resna with their prisoner they heard behind them, far off, the sound of the cannon in Monastir that were saluting the Constitution. Niazi and his *fedais* had sworn not to return to their homes until their country had won its freedom, and now, having faithfully observed their oaths, he and many of his followers rejoined their rejoicing wives and families in Resna. Throughout the following day, July 24, Resna, like every other town and village in Turkey,

presented an extraordinary spectacle. The people seemed to be mad with enthusiasm and delight. Turks, Bulgarians, Greeks, Servians, Wallachs were all as brothers. Several Bulgarian and Greek bands, one of the former led by the redoubtable Cherchis himself, tramped into Resna that day to take part in the universal jollification and fraternisation. Banners bearing the device, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Justice," and national flags innumerable waved in the breeze, and all day long the people were shouting themselves hoarse with cries of "Long live the Nation!" "Long live the Army!" "Long live the Committee!" After a twenty-four hours' halt in Resna, during which he was occupied in receiving the Christian band leaders and administering the oath to them, and making arrangements in case of a *levée en masse* of the people (for it was uncertain yet whether the Sultan would submit or plunge the country into civil war), Niazi, by order of the Committee, marched back to Monastir with the two hundred original *fedais* of his band, accompanied by Cherchis and other leaders of the Christian bands.

And here Niazi passes out of this story. I have given a somewhat full account of his wanderings, as the narrative will make clear the nature of the work that was done all over the country by those whose mission it was to gain the adherence of the civil population to the revolutionary cause; and

I think that it also shows that those virtues without which no people can be great or worthy of any respect—patriotism, and the readiness to sacrifice self for a high ideal—are possessed in a high degree by the Moslem Turks. Niazi was the first young officer to take to the mountains, and it was to his lot that the most important work fell; but it needed many others like him to make the insurrection so universal as it was. Enver Bey and dozens of other young officers were doing the same work as Niazi and with like success in other parts of the country. The local Committees, too, appear to have been wonderfully organised and to have been directed by single-minded patriots of great ability who kept ever in the background, their names unknown, and took no part in the public rejoicings when the victory was won. Thus the Committees in Uskeb and Janina, by their diligent propaganda, respectively won over the allegiance of the Northern Albanians and the Southern Albanians at the same time that Niazi was gaining that of the Western Albanians. Niazi is essentially the soldier, simple and straightforward and not a politician, and now that his mission at the time of his country's peril has been successfully accomplished, he is back in his own province quietly fulfilling his military duties in the midst of troops who would follow him to hell, as our own private soldiers would put it.

CHAPTER XIV

The Committee in possession of Monastir—The proclamation of the Constitution in Monastir—The Committee's ultimatum to the Sultan—Hilmi Pasha explains the situation to the Palace—Dismissal of the Grand Vizier—The last State Council under the old *régime*—The Sultan restores to Turkey its Constitution.

On the night of July 22, so soon as Osman Pasha had been made a prisoner, the members of the Monastir Centre of the Committee of Union and Progress proceeded to take over the government of the city and to secure the position that had been gained by Niazi's *coup*. In the first place, the Committee sent a telegram to the Sultan himself (to the Presence of His Sacred Majesty, the Caliph), beseeching him to command the practical application of the Fundamental Law (the Constitution of 1876) in order that the loyalty and devotion of his subjects might remain unimpaired; and informing him that, unless an *Iradé* ordering the opening of the Chamber of Deputies was issued by the following Sunday—July 26—events would "occur contrary to your Royal will and pleasure." The telegram concluded with the words: "The civil authorities, the officers of the army, the soldiers, the

ulema and *sheikhs*, the people great and small, of various creeds, within the Vilayet of Monastir, all united to work for one cause by an oath made upon the Unity of God, await your commands." Another telegram was despatched to inform the head-quarters of the Committee in Salonica that the *coup* had been made with success, and during that night young officers posted manifestoes on the walls in that city calling upon the people to co-operate with the Committee and overthrow the Despotism.

On the morning of July 23 the citizens of Monastir woke up to find that all signs of the Government's authority had vanished, and that the Committee had become the undisputed master of the Vilayet. It was a day of frenzied rejoicings. The fifty thousand inhabitants of this city and thousands of people from the surrounding country packed the streets to cheer and sing the songs of liberty. Sometimes a narrow way would be opened through the dense crowd to allow the passing of companies of Anatolian troops joyfully marching to some appointed spot where they were to be sworn in on the Unity of God as adherents of the Committee; or of a body of citizens carrying aloft on their shoulders the *fedais*, the members of the Moslem bands that had saved Turkey, the heroes of the hour.

And ever and again there rose a roar of "Long live the Committee!" and the people went about

seeking the members of the Committee, eager to do them honour and give them an ovation as they had done with the *fedais*. But the mysterious and invisible Committee was nowhere to be found. An absorbing curiosity got hold of the people. Who were the men, they asked themselves, who had acted on the executive of the Committee, the secret leaders who had issued the manifestoes and orders, who had organised the movement with such skill and daring? But it was impossible to obtain any answer to this question. It was not until some days after the Sultan had granted the Constitution that Niazi himself was given the names of those who composed the Monastir Executive, and then he found that among them were some of his most intimate friends.

But on this wonderful day, July 23, the executive body of the Committee was too busily engaged on most important work to come forward and receive the congratulations that were its due; for much had yet to be done. The Committee decided not to await the Sultan's reply to its demand, but to proclaim the Constitution that very day in Monastir, and it was held that the most fitting person to make this announcement to the people would be the Governor of the Monastir Vilayet himself, the Vali, Hifzi Pasha. The Vali, as we have seen, had been bold enough, a few days earlier, to tell the Palace the exact truth concerning the state of affairs in Macedonia.

In reply to this the Grand Vizier had telegraphed to rebuke him for lack of zeal and to give him certain instructions. On this the Vali had sent in his resignation to the Grand Vizier on the ground that he would not be responsible for the bloodshed and outrages which must follow the execution of such orders. It was well known to the Committee that the Vali was a just and upright man whose sympathies were rather with the friends of liberty than with the Despotism which he served.

On the morning of the twenty-third the Vali openly joined the revolutionary party. He sent telegrams to the Sultan and the Grand Vizier informing them of the capture of Osman Pasha, and stating that the entire military force in Monastir and 3,500 armed men from among the inhabitants were now the sworn adherents of the Committee. In the afternoon the Vali read out the Committee's proclamation of the Constitution in the presence of tens of thousands of enthusiastic Moslems and Christians, and the garrison of Monastir; and then the cannon thundered out a salute that told the surrounding country that Turkey was to be made free at last.

On this same day the Central Committee in Salonica and the branch Committees in other towns came forward to give clear proof to the people that the domination of the Palace was over. The Constitution was proclaimed in Resna,

Dibra and other towns in Macedonia and Albania at the same hour that it was proclaimed in Monastir. In Salonica the Central Committee, which here, too, had the garrison on its side and the Government at its mercy, decided that it would be to the interest of the revolutionary cause to make as short as possible the period of uncertainty as to whether it was to be civil war or peace; the enemies of liberty must be allowed no time for preparation or intrigue. Accordingly, at an early hour on June 23 the Committee telegraphed its ultimatum to the Sultan, informing His Majesty that unless he granted the Constitution within twenty-four hours the Second and Third Army Corps would march upon Constantinople.

The Committee's next step was to approach the Inspector General, Hilmi Pasha (who was made Grand Vizier in February last), and to call upon him, as the highest Government official in Macedonia, to proclaim the Constitution to the people. Hilmi had been a good servant of the Sultan, but at heart he hated the corrupt Palace and its ways, and recognised the justice of the Young Turkey cause which he had been instructed to persecute, but had persecuted so half-heartedly that he had drawn upon himself the rebukes of the Grand Vizier, Ferid Pasha. Hilmi's attitude was now correct and courageous. He told the Committee that though his sympathies were with

the Young Turkey party, he was still the servant of the Sultan, and consequently could not proclaim the Constitution unless ordered to do so by his sovereign. Upon this the Committee informed him that unless he proclaimed the Constitution within twenty-four hours he would have to suffer the penalty—that is, to be put to death—that the telegraph lines were at his disposal and it behoved him, within the given time, to persuade the Sultan that resistance to the will of the people would be of no avail, and that His Majesty could only retain his position on the throne by the immediate restoration of the Constitution.

So Hilmi Pasha now sent telegram after telegram to the Palace to explain the exact state of affairs. He exposed the absolute hopelessness of the cause of the old *régime*—the two Pashas on whom the Sultan had relied to destroy the Committee of Union and Progress, Hilmi and Osman, were the prisoners of the Committee; the Anatolian troops that were to have stamped out the rebellion had become the sworn adherents of the Committee; the Second and Third Army Corps now formed the army of the Committee; of the First Army Corps in Constantinople itself the Palace Guards alone were above suspicion; there was no time to arouse the fanaticism of the Arabs and other Asiatics against the Young Turks; the action of the Anatolian regiments that had been brought to Salonica had proved

that the Army Corps in Asia Minor had also been brought round to the side of the reformers; and lastly, from all over the Empire the news was coming in that Valis of provinces and other high officials had deserted the Palace Camarilla for the constitutional party.

That day the people of Turkey were rejoicing in their newly found liberty; but it was a twenty-four hours of suspense and anxiety for the men who knew that it rested on the decision of one old man as to whether it was to be peace or civil war. The ultimatum of the Committee and the telegrams of Hilmi Pasha were submitted to the Sultan by his terrified courtiers; but in the council chambers of the Yildiz, almost up to the last moment, there was hesitation and a conflict of opinions as to the course that should be adopted by the Government. There were, of course, members of the Camarilla, Izzet Pasha among them, who advocated resistance at any cost to the demands of the Committee, for these men, conscious of the evil they had wrought, knew that the Constitution would mean for them ruin and exile, and perhaps death.

But, in the meanwhile, the Sultan had dismissed his Grand Vizier, Ferid Pasha, and had summoned to his Palace Said Pasha and Kiamil Pasha, the two oldest, most experienced, and upright statesmen of his reign, both of whom, though no admirers of Palace methods, had been

Grand Viziers, and both of whom had been in disgrace and danger of their lives through the monarch's caprice and the jealousy of corrupt courtiers. The Sultan now appointed Said Pasha Grand Vizier in the place of Ferid Pasha. Throughout the day there had been fear and wrath and hesitation in the Yildiz, but on the evening of the twenty-third all the ministers were summoned to the Palace, and there was held the famous last State Council under the old *régime*. There was a long and anxious discussion, and to and fro between the Council and the Sultan went the Chief Chamberlain and other messengers, keeping His Majesty informed of the progress of the debate—a mere matter of form as laid down by the etiquette of the Palace, for, as every one there knew, the Sultan was in the adjoining chamber sitting on the other side of the curtain which alone divided him from his consulting ministers, and could hear every word that was spoken.

The night passed by, the morning was near, and the ministers were still debating. Said and Kiamil urged the necessity of yielding, and there were others who agreed with them; but Abdul Hamid inspired as much fear as ever in his advisers, and each of these, knowing of what things that listening man was capable when in a fit of anger, was afraid to be the first to utter the long-forbidden name "Constitution"; and the

question was discussed in that ambiguous and circuitous fashion that Orientals understand so well how to employ. At last there was brought into the Council Chamber on a litter the bed-ridden old Arab Court Astrologer, Abdul Houda, a favourite of the Sultan, who has recently died. He boldly put into plain words what was in the minds of all. Then Said Pasha asked the ministers whether it was their decision that the Sultan should be advised to grant the Constitution. To this they made no reply, and averted their eyes when he looked from one to another. Then, after a pause, Said quoted a Turkish proverb which is the equivalent of our own "Silence gives consent." The Sultan was forthwith informed of the decision of his ministers, and to the relief of all he agreed without any demur to restore the Constitution; for the shrewd monarch had by now fully realised the position and had made up his mind.

So on the morning of July 24, the great news was telegraphed to every corner of the Ottoman Empire, and everywhere there were the same extraordinary demonstrations of popular joy. In Constantinople huge crowds, composed of Moslems, Christians and Jews, flocked to the Yildiz to cheer the Sultan. On the broad quay of Salonica Hilmi Pasha, to whom the Sultan's decision had meant the withdrawal of his death warrant, read out the proclamation of the

Constitution to tens of thousands of exulting citizens.

The Sultan had promised the Constitution, and all that remained to be done now was for him to issue the *Iradé* that should confirm that promise and to take the oath of allegiance to the Constitution. Some days passed, and his Majesty had taken no steps to perform these necessary formalities. The ever-vigilant Committee of Union and Progress therefore saw to it that there should be no further delay, and issued its orders. Some Macedonian troops were hurriedly brought up to the capital and were placed outside the Yildiz, while a man-of-war was stationed in the Bosphorus immediately below the Palace, with its guns directed on it. Then some young officers belonging to the Committee demanded an audience of the Sultan and explained to him that he must sign the *Iradé* there and then, else the Macedonian troops would overpower the Palace Guard and seize his Majesty's person. The Sultan yielded, the *Iradé* was signed, and shortly afterwards the Sheikh-ul-Islam administered to Abdul Hamid the oath by which he bound himself to restore, and to faithfully observe, the Constitution which he had violated thirty years before.

CHAPTER XV

After the revolution—The return of the exiles—Demonstrations and fraternisations—The coming in of the Macedonian bands—The opening of the prison doors—The obedience of the people to the Committee—The suppression of the coaling strike—The boycott of Austrian trade—Attitude of the Christian population.

THE victory had been won; the Young Turkey party was triumphant; the Ottoman people had gained their liberty. There was complete individual liberty and liberty of the Press; there were no more spies, no more domiciliary visits, no more oppression. In short, the Turks, who for a generation had been groaning under the cruelest of oriental despotisms, in one day became as free as the people of England, indeed in some respects considerably freer than ourselves. Peace came of a sudden to this troubled land which had for so long been an inferno of implacable racial hatreds, all men went about in security, and the peasants were able to sow their fields knowing that they themselves would be the reapers. This was not as other revolutions; for though for a time there was no law in the land and no administration, there was no anarchy,

there were no cruel reprisals, there were no excesses; the conduct of the entire population was admirable.

These revolutionaries, unlike those in some other lands, did not hasten, so soon as they had freed themselves of one despotism, to cast upon the country the still more galling chains of democratic tyranny. The people who made this revolution were the educated men in Turkey, all that was best in the country; and thus from the beginning this had been the most conservative of revolutions. There was nothing approaching to socialism or anarchism in this movement. The Young Turks, as I have already explained, have no theories about the reconstruction of society; they have no schemes for the benefiting of one class by the spoliation of another; they do not believe that one man is as good as another, or that manhood suffrage will bring the Millennium. Like our own revolution of 1688, this one came from above and not from below. That the ignorant masses did not usurp the direction of the movement, and by discrediting it prepare the way for the restoration of the despotic power, was largely due to the fact that Turkey, fortunately for herself, has had her revolution before she has arrived at that stage of economic and industrial development when what we term the working classes think out political and social theories, or, rather, accept the views of the mischievous

demagogues who mislead them. There is no class hatred in Turkey; there are no large manufacturing industries to produce hordes of discontented people in the big cities, and, so far, there are no agrarian questions to trouble the minds of the simple and pious Turkish peasantry.

Of the seventy thousand exiles who returned to Turkey from Europe and America after the proclamation of the Constitution there were of course some who had mixed with Russian anarchists, with internationalists and other political extremists, and had absorbed their theories; but these are in a small minority and exercise no appreciable influence. The same may be said of a certain set of well-to-do exiles who for years were idle Paris *flaneurs*, lost some of their Ottoman virtues, became poor patriots, and have now returned as *dilettante* politicians, some of them to join the party which advocates a thoroughgoing home rule all round for the various races of Turkey—a programme detestable to the more earnest Young Turks, who realise that such a policy would lead to the certain disintegration of the Empire.

But it is of the attitude of the people themselves and not of the politicians that I wish to speak in this chapter. When the Ottomans of all races and creeds suddenly found themselves free they became filled with an exceeding joy, a new sentiment of brotherhood, and a profound gratitude to the saviours of the country, the Committee of

Union and Progress, that took the practical form of implicit obedience to the Committee's mandates, so that it had little difficulty in preserving order. All over the country there were great demonstrations and rejoicings of enthusiastic and good-natured crowds, that touched foreign spectators of these scenes and compelled the sympathy even of the cynically inclined. In the streets and *cafés* and tramcars of the capital, wherein men had been wont to meet in silence, each suspecting the other, strangers, united by a common joy, now spoke to each other freely and in kindly fashion. It was a reign of universal amity, and it seemed as if all that is best in human nature had come to the top. European witnesses have described the wonderful fraternisations of men of all races and creeds; how Turks, Armenians, Bulgarians and Jews harangued sympathetic crowds in the streets of the capital, preaching peace and good will among men; how even in Beyrout, notorious for the massacres of Christians under the late *régime*, Christian priests and turbanned *mollahs* embraced publicly before fraternising mobs of Moslems and Armenians; how in the same city the Turkish commander with his officers and troops attended a service in the Armenian church to lament over the massacres of their Christian fellow-countrymen; and how, with the same object, crowds of Moslems in Stamboul went to the Armenian cemetery to pray and place flowers upon the graves of those

who had been slaughtered by the orders of the Palace. It was the same in Jerusalem, where the various Christian sects—hitherto kept from flying at each other's throats by the bayonets of the Moslem soldiery—now made friends and joined in processions with Mussulmans and Jews.

In Salonica, the headquarters of the revolution, there were scenes of intense national rejoicing that astonished European observers. The Bulgarian, Greek, and other leaders of bands, the Albanian brigand chiefs, and all their followings of ferocious outlaws of the hills, on whose heads there had been a price for years, men of different races who since boyhood had been burning each other's villages and killing each other's women, flocked into the town to submit to the Committee, to be reconciled to one another and to become the friends of the Moslem Turks. Sandansky himself, the king of the mountains, the most formidable of the Bulgarian leaders of bands, came in, harangued the crowds on liberty, fraternity and justice, and was received with the greatest enthusiasm. All these fighting men, who had spread terror through Macedonia and Albania, clad in the picturesque dress of Europe's wildest and least known regions, forgot civil war and blood feuds, fraternised with each other and with the Turkish soldiery, marched down the streets roaring the songs of liberty, hobnobbed together over cups of coffee, and sometimes mastic

and raki, in the *cafés*, embraced each other and swore to be brothers.

I was in Salonica four months after Turkey had won her freedom, and the national jubilation had not yet subsided; it was everywhere exultation and good-fellowship. Here, in this city of many races, I found myself surrounded by a refreshing atmosphere of joyous delight in the new-found liberty. From the window of my hotel I looked out upon the busy quay and the blue sea that stretched to the snows of Olympus. Along this quay passes most of the life of the town, and at frequent intervals something happened in front of me to remind me of the revolution and of the keenness of the people. Now it was a procession of Christians and Mussulmans fraternising and singing patriotic songs on their way to the railway station to cheer a newly elected Deputy who was starting for Constantinople; now it was a body of troops of the Macedonian army marching through crowds which hailed them as their liberators; now a battalion paraded on the quay to be exhorted by some general before embarking for Constantinople, for at that time the Young Turks were despatching more of their faithful troops to the capital, determined to be in readiness should the forces of reaction reassert themselves; now it was the return from over the water of some exile of despotism to the friends and relatives who had not seen him for years. Thus

one morning I saw a flag-decorated tender come off from a newly-arrived steamer and land on the stage in front of me the Albanian General, Mehmed Pasha, just freed from a long exile in Bagdad; he was welcomed with shouts and clapping of hands by the large crowd of Albanians and others who had come to escort him to his house.

There were most affecting sights, too, to be seen in those early days of liberty. When it was decreed that political prisoners should be liberated, the gates of the prisons were thrown open, and out poured, in their thousands, the captives of the Despotism, to be received by crowds of deeply moved sympathisers. Many of these unfortunate men had been confined for years in cells but twelve feet square, and came out into fresh air and sunshine dazed and weak in mind, like the prisoner of the Bastille in Dickens' famous story, to be led home by relatives and friends. Here one would see outside the prison door a husband and wife greet each other with tears of joy after years of separation, and here some poor wretch, with spirit long since tortured out of him, weeping miserably as he wandered to and fro because no dear ones had come to meet him, and he realised that they had died while he was in captivity.

It was pleasant to observe the confidence and pride of the population in the Young Turk leaders, who had sacrificed so much for liberty

and justice. The patriotism of the people of Salonica was then being displayed in various ways. Large sums were being collected to supply comforts to the troops who throughout the winter were to guard the northern frontier against any attack on the part of Turkey's enemies, and a movement had also been started in the town, which, if it spreads far enough, may relieve the Government of some of its embarrassments. Officers of the garrison and civil servants of all grades, reading of the depleted treasury and the heavy burden of the floating debt, were abandoning their claims to their arrears of pay, because, as they said, their country needed the money. Deputies, also, were refusing to accept their travelling allowances.

For one who knew Turkey under the old *régime* it was very interesting, in Constantinople, to observe the outward signs of the great change which had come to the country, and to note the attitude of a population which found itself suddenly in the enjoyment of the widest liberty. In most countries, after such a revolution, the people would have been intoxicated with their new freedom; the forces of disorder would have been let loose; there would have been, for a while, a condition approaching anarchy. But Constantinople is not like other European capitals, and it took its revolution in a sensible fashion. All the old restrictions had been swept away; but liberty

had not broken into license. Though there was no longer a censorship of printed matter, the Turkish Press observed a dignified moderation in its tone. For the first time the comic papers were free to publish political caricatures in which the highest personages were represented; but if one might judge from such as were exhibited in the windows of the newspaper shops, there was nothing offensive in these somewhat crude pictures. Large crowds attended political meetings in the capital; but there was no disturbance of the peace and there was no need for the presence of the police or the troops, save when the Greeks, who are never happy unless they have some real or imaginary grievance to make a noise about, made demonstrations during the elections. People now enjoyed the right to form themselves into associations, but one heard of no anarchical societies; and apparently the first result of this new privilege was that the Turkish temperance reformers availed themselves of it to establish a total abstinence league in Cæsarea.

But, as might be expected, the interregnum between the withdrawal of the authority of the old *régime* with its severe code and its armies of spies, and the reorganisation of the police and other departments by the Young Turks was taken advantage of to some extent by the ignorant and lawless. At the beginning of the revolution all prisoners, including the criminals,

were released from the gaols—probably because it was impossible in many cases, to ascertain whether the offence for which a man had been confined was a political one or otherwise. The restrictions on the sale and carrying of fire-arms were also removed, with the result that revolvers in tens of thousands poured into the city and were at once bought up. A large proportion of the population carried revolvers and also let them off; men practised with them in the streets; accidents were frequent; and in some quarters of the city, especially in the poorer Greek quarters, it was not unusual to hear a regular fusillade going on at night, generally in honour of something or other, or to spread the news that a house was on fire. Robbery with violence in the streets certainly increased after the revolution. But, notwithstanding all this, it could not be fairly said that Constantinople was a dangerous place to walk about in at any hour; and indeed, when it is remembered what a lot of cosmopolitan blackguardism there is in that city of over a million inhabitants, it is astonishing that there was so large a measure of security for life and property.

It was natural, too, that Turks of the poorer and more ignorant class should be under the impression that this new constitutional liberty meant that each man was free to do what he liked—a common error which before long was

eradicated from the minds of this naturally law-abiding people by the Young Turk administration. Thus many thought that the Constitution wiped out the liability to pay any private debts incurred before the revolution. In the country, peasants came to the conclusion that they would no longer be called upon to pay taxes; in the towns the contrabandists sold their smuggled tobacco openly; and in Constantinople itself the popular conception of liberty produced some amusing results. The firewood sellers were to be seen calmly chopping up their logs in the middle of a busy thoroughfare; pavements were often blocked with the wares of the hawkers; and others in like manner carried on their avocations in public; so that the narrow, crowded streets and the Galata Bridge, difficult enough to traverse in the days of the old *régime*, became almost impassable. This sums up the inconveniences of the interregnum; they were wonderfully few and trifling when one bears in mind what a revolution this had been.

It was, of course, difficult for the Young Turks to reorganise the police and carry out administrative reforms until Parliament met; for the provisionary Ministry was naturally disinclined to accept much responsibility. But in the meanwhile, though there was a little license in small matters, the people were made to understand clearly that the Committee would stand no

nonsense. This was proved at the time of the coaling strike in Galata not long after the proclamation of the Constitution. The men, having struck once and obtained the concession of their demands, came to the conclusion that under the new Constitution they were free to extort what they pleased and terrorise the population; so they struck again for a prohibitive rate of wage which would have closed the port to commerce. It was a critical time: the Young Turks were on their trial; their movement had been represented by their enemies as anarchical; their cause would be lost were they to fail to preserve order among the populace. It must be remembered that this was not only the question of a strike, but of probable rioting of so serious a nature that it might have caused European intervention; for these labourers who coal the ships at Galata belong to that rabble of Kurds and other Mussulmans of the lowest class which is only too ready, on a hint from the Palace, to set about massacring Armenians and other Christians.

It therefore behoved the Young Turks to prove that they could rule men, and they did so. Two young officers rode boldly, unescorted, into the middle of a dangerous crowd of the strikers, and by their firm attitude compelled the men to listen to them. First they tried persuasion, and pointed out to the strikers that by their action they were prejudicing the cause

of freedom which they had so loudly acclaimed but a few days before. But the men would not be persuaded and refused to go back to their work. Then the two officers changed their attitude. One, drawing his revolver, reminded the men that under the old *régime* the soldiers would have been sent to throw them into the water or cast them into prison! "And as you are conducting yourselves as friends of the old *régime*, so shall you be treated," he exclaimed. "I will come down here to-morrow and ask you to return at once to your work. I will with my own hand shoot down the first man who refuses to do so, and the rest of you will be swept into the sea or into prison." The next morning the two officers rode to the quay followed by a body of cavalry. The strikers knew that what had been said was meant, and quietly went off to work, and there has been no trouble since with this dangerous element of the population.

Indeed, the Committee, by its firmness and justice, made itself loved of the people, who at last came to obey its orders without question. Thus, when the Committee enjoined the strict boycott of Austrian trade, while at the same time forbidding the populace to molest or insult Austrian subjects, a wonderful thing happened. The Austrians were able to go about the streets in perfect safety; and the Austrian shops remained open, but no one would buy of them,

however cheaply they offered their goods. The rough and ignorant Kurds who do the coaling and also earn their living as lightermen and as porters in Galata, and the poor Jews who do the same work in Salonica, to a man enforced the boycott, though it meant for them a great falling off in their small wages, and short commons for their families. Thus no Constantinople boatman would take a passenger off to an Austrian steamer, or carry him on shore from it when he reached his destination. These steamers had to use their own launches for the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers; and the person who had sailed under this tabooed flag sometimes found himself in a sorry plight even after he had been landed on a Turkish quay, no porter being willing to carry his baggage. But in February last, so soon as the Governments of Turkey and Austria had arranged their differences, the Committee of Union and Progress gave the word that the boycott should cease: and cease it did within an hour of this order: the boatmen, porters, lightermen, and dock labourers in every port in Turkey coming out as one man to work again for the Austrians.

In the cities and in the countryside all seemed to be going well with the cause of the Young Turks; but foreigners who observed this harmonious opening of the new *régime* and this extraordinary fraternisation of men of different

races and creeds hitherto irreconcileable asked themselves how long this reign of universal friendship could last, and whether this falling into each other's arms of Turks, Armenians, Bulgarians and others, was due to any sentiment more deep and permanent than the joyous intoxication caused by this unaccustomed wine of liberty. Like other Englishmen in Turkey at that time, I came to the conclusion that the Young Turks were quite sincere; that they were honestly desirous to have done with internal strife, to give equality to all the elements of the population, and to live in peace and friendship with their non-Moslem fellow-countrymen. The Armenians and Jews have proved their sincerity by co-operating loyally with the Young Turks throughout the parliamentary elections and since. Of the Macedonian Christians the bulk had become weary of bloodshed and the internecine conflict that had brought nothing but suffering and ruin to the population; and there was no insincerity about the friendly relationship that sprang up between the sturdy Bulgarian leaders of fighting bands and their former foes, the Turkish officers, for they respected each other. The civil warfare in Macedonia had been deliberately fomented by the machinations of the Palace gang, to whom the doctrine of *divide et impera* was ideal statesmanship, and to the intrigues of Bulgaria, Servia and Greece. There is no reason why, if left

alone, these peoples might not dwell together in peace. A short time since a *mollah*, addressing the people, said, "Before the reign of Abdul Hamid the Moslem and Christian mothers used to nurse each other's children." But will these Macedonian peoples be left alone by Palace agents of reaction, by those Great Powers whose interests are opposed to the creation of a strong and independent Turkey, and by the greedy little neighbouring states?

It is, of course, too much to hope that constitutional government has put a sudden end to the religious and racial strife in Macedonia. The Greeks in the country have already demonstrated the illusiveness of such an expectation. The Greeks, like the others, welcomed the Constitution and fraternised with their Ottoman fellow-countrymen. Carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment they may have been sincere in their protestations of brotherhood, but one suspects that the mental reservations were at the back of their brains all the while. If one misjudges them in this, then their own actions and the utterances of their Press belie them. In the hour of national jubilation they supplied the one discordant note. One of the first uses that they made of the freedom which the Young Turks had won for them was to boycott and insult the Bulgarians in Salonica, and the news came that the Greek clergymen in the interior were once more persecuting the

Bulgarian exarchists, and had drawn up pre-scription lists of the leading Bulgarians with a view to getting them assassinated. The Greek element of the population, as might be expected, was the first to express dissatisfaction with the policy and administration of the Young Turks. The intolerant and often mischievously active Greek Patriarchate in Constantinople, which denied the Bulgarians the use of their own language, supported the Greeks in clamouring for much more than was their due. Their idea of Ottoman citizenship, so far as themselves were concerned, was to avoid all the obligations of that citizenship, while enjoying all the rights conferred by it and retaining all their special privileges intact. They seemed to think that the government of Turkey should be in their hands. During the elections it was they alone who provoked rioting, and at Smyrna they created a dangerous disturbance with their armed mobs.

CHAPTER XVI

The interregnum—The Committee's measures to secure the Constitution—The army, the Mohammedan religion and the Press on the Committee's side—Dispersal of the Camarilla—Abandonment of the Anglo-Russian scheme—Retention of old officials—Saïd Pasha and Kiamil Pasha as Grand Viziers—Hilmi Pasha becomes Grand Vizier—European assistance welcomed by Turkey.

DURING the four months' interregnum between the granting of the Constitution and the opening of Parliament, the Committee of Union and Progress was the undisputed ruler of Turkey. It dictated to the monarch what his decrees should be, it moved armies, it removed and appointed ministers, governors of provinces, and other high officials. These untried young men who formed the Committee, while introducing a new order of things and protecting their country against the numerous dangers that threatened to destroy the newly gained liberty, displayed a wisdom, tact, moderation, shrewdness, and foresight that were astonishing to foreign observers. They maintained order with firmness, greatly assisted in this by the dignified self-control and patriotism of the people themselves. Though they and thousands of others had suffered much

from the cruelty and rapacity of the Despotism and its parasites, they displayed no vindictiveness; they punished only the most guilty of these; removed only those who showed by their actions that they were a source of danger to the Constitution; and they frankly forgave the others. The relations of Turkey with foreign Powers were directed by them with a tactful and resourceful statesmanship. Their mistakes were remarkably few.

From the beginning they showed their fitness to rule. The avowed object of the Young Turks had been to depose the Sultan, and when they offered him the alternative of acceptance of the Constitution or abdication, they had little expectation that he would submit to their conditions. But when the astute Sultan did submit in a very graceful manner, protesting that he was a believer in a constitutional form of government, and posing as if he and not the revolutionary party had brought the boon of liberty to his subjects, the Young Turks showed their statesmanship by as graciously accepting the situation, and became once more the loyal subjects of a constitutional monarch, whose cleverness and diplomatic experience, if he would now use them rightly, might be of great service to his country and his people. The Sultan is the Commander of the Faithful to millions of Mussulmans, and had the Committee attempted to depose him at that

critical time a long civil war might have resulted. So Abdul Hamid was left on the throne of Othman, nominally ruling, to outward seeming popular with the people, who cheered him enthusiastically whenever he appeared in public. But the Young Turks had not forgotten how Abdul Hamid in 1878 destroyed the Constitution which he had sworn to uphold, so that power behind the throne, the Committee of Union and Progress, remained ever watchful, as the strong guardian of the people's liberties.

I will now briefly sum up the results of the Committee's energetic action during the few weeks immediately following the proclamation of the Constitution. In the first place it had to make itself as strong as possible so as to combat the reactionary intrigues that were working for the restoration of the Despotism. It therefore set itself to establish its hold on the army, to obtain the sanction of the Moslem religion, and to complete the pacification of Macedonia. It took the precaution of removing from the Second and Third Army Corps all officers suspected of reactionary views, and concentrated the bulk of the troops loyal to the Constitution at Adrianople, within striking distance of the capital, where, at any rate, a considerable portion of the First Army Corps and the Sultan's Prætorian Guard only needed the word from the Palace to become the instrument of the reactionaries. Later on the

Committee was able to obtain the removal of most of the battalions of the Imperial Guard from Constantinople and to replace them with troops from Salonica, thus securing the Committee's domination in the capital.

As regards the religious question, the work of the Young Turks was made easy by the Sheikh-ul-Islam, who—so soon as he had administered to the Sultan the oath by which the latter swore to respect the Constitution—proclaimed to the faithful that constitutional government was not contrary to, but was in accordance with, the teaching of the Koran; he rebuked the fanatics who were preaching against the reforms as being anti-religious, and saw to it that the mosques were not used as centres of reactionary agitation and intrigue. For the reactionaries were not idle, and, in European as well as in Asiatic Turkey, their agents—often ex-palace spies disguised as doctors of the sacred law and *hodjas*—were appealing to Moslem bigotry and denouncing the Constitution as the invention of the Evil One himself. To counteract this mischievous propaganda the Committee sent out its own missionaries all over the country, and doctors learned in the sacred law and others enlightened the people, supporting their arguments with quotations from the Koran, and in many cases preaching sermons that had been written for this purpose by the Sheikh-ul-Islam himself. It was

also a great help to the cause that nearly all the Turkish Press supported the Committee. Indeed, during the first few months of the new *régime*, a paper holding the unpopular opposite opinions would have had but few readers.

The Committee, having Army, Religion and Press on its side, was strong enough to dominate the Palace. It demanded of the Sultan the signing of *Iradé* after *Iradé*, and if the required Imperial decree was not immediately forthcoming, a threat that the Adrianople army would march upon Constantinople within twenty-four hours always produced the desired effect. Thus, within a few days after the proclamation of the Constitution, Abdul Hamid had to sign *Iradés* by virtue of which he granted a general amnesty, the release of all political prisoners, the abolition of the spy system, the inviolability of domicile, a free Press, the abolition of the censorship, the liberty of the individual to travel in foreign countries, in short, all the privileges enjoyed by the citizens of free countries.

Then the Sultan was compelled to dismiss his favourites and principal advisers, including his hated secretary, Izzet Pasha, his old Arab Astrologer, Abdul Houda, Tashin Pasha, and Ismail Pasha, the founder of the detestable military spy system. The Camarilla, that had all but destroyed Turkey, was broken up and scattered. Izzet and several other notorious people effected their escape

to England and elsewhere—fortunately for some of them, who, had they remained, would probably have been torn to pieces by infuriated mobs, like the infamous Fehmi Pasha. But the Young Turks, as I have explained, despite the intense hatred which some of them must have nourished against the cruel oppressors and traitors to their country who had acted as the instruments of the Despotism, refrained from vengeance, and there were no reprisals. Penalties were only inflicted where the country's good demanded these. Some of the worst ministers of the tyranny were imprisoned in the War Office, or confined in their own houses on Prinkipo Island in the Sea of Marmora, where many rich Turks have their summer residences. Some have undergone their trial, and have been compelled to disgorge the public moneys which they had embezzled. For the rest it was complete amnesty, and when the Constantinople mobs began to occupy themselves in hunting down men recognised to have been spies of the Palace, in order to carry them off to the prison of the War Office, the Committee, whose word had to be obeyed, peremptorily forbade this practice. On the other hand, if any man took advantage of this leniency to indulge in reactionary intrigue, sterner justice was administered. Ismail Pasha, for example, the inventor of the military spy system, for very good reasons

was shot in Constantinople in December last by a young officer.

The Committee recognised that one of their first duties was to complete the pacification of Macedonia. They successfully accomplished this within a very short time, and without bloodshed. The Greeks alone were causing any difficulty; but the Greek bishops, clergy, and leaders of bands came to understand that the Young Turks would put up with no nonsense from them, and that the sympathy of Europe would not be with them if they resisted the new *régime*. So it was not long after the granting of the Constitution that the last Greek band came in, and for the first time for many years there was peace in Macedonia. The British Government, recognising that there was no longer any need for European intervention in that region, withdrew from the arrangement with Russia that had resulted from the Reval meeting, displaying a confidence in the Young Turks that won their deep gratitude. The Young Turks had a very keen appreciation of the sympathy that was displayed for them by the English. To Englishmen travelling in the country, at that time, the sincere and hearty friendship extended to them by the Turkish people was most gratifying and affecting.

It is one thing to make a revolution, but it is quite another thing to undertake to govern and

administer a country after the successful revolution has swept away the old order. The Young Turks showed that they were wise enough to know their own limitations. There were few among them who had any knowledge of administration, public finance and diplomacy; so they decided to make use of the existing machinery of government. They got rid of the notoriously corrupt among the high officials, but retained the services of the more capable and upright of the ministers, provincial governors and others, even if they happened to be Pashas of the old school, fanatical Mussulmans who hated European ways, looked askance at liberty, and regarded with horror the scheme for giving equal rights to Christians and Moslems. But these old servants of the State were kept under observation, and they were promptly ousted if they failed to exercise their authority on the lines laid down by the Constitution, and faithfully to hold aloof from reactionary intrigue. As many of these officials were honest patriots at heart, though narrow-minded in their views, the compromise worked well pending the training of a new school of administrators belonging to the Young Turk party.

Thus to the highest office of all, the Grand Vizierate, men of long administrative experience have been appointed. So soon as the Sultan had submitted to the will of the people, the then

Grand Vizier, Ferid Pasha, and his ministers had to go, for they were too closely connected with the Hamidian system to be trusted; but the three Grand Viziers who have so far succeeded Ferid—Said Pasha, Kiamil Pasha, and Hilmi Pasha—have all taken a prominent part as servants of the State under the old *régime*, Said and Hilmi having already been Grand Viziers on several occasions. Said Pasha, the first Grand Vizier under the new *régime*, has been the Sultan's friend and adviser—disgraced at intervals like the rest—from the commencement of the reign. First, as the Sultan's secretary, he helped his master to overthrow Midhat Pasha's Constitution and to destroy the power of the Sublime Porte. A few years later, as Grand Vizier, he encouraged the Sultan in his Pan-Islamic dreams, and in his effort to deprive the Christians in Turkey of their ancient privileges. He had proved himself an upright and strong man, and in his old age he had modified his views and recognised the evils of the despotic system which he had helped to build up, but he was scarcely the right sort of man to be Prime Minister under a constitutional government, and it is not astonishing that his term of office lasted for but a few days. His first mistake was in the execution of the Imperial *Iradé* that liberated all political prisoners. He took it upon himself to free all the criminals as well, letting loose upon the capital, at that critical

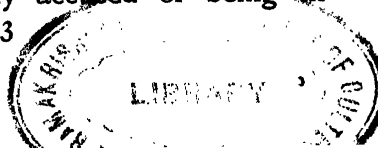
time, a crowd of murderers and robbers. The ever watchful Committee, mindful of Said's career, suspected that he had acted thus in order to cause disorder in the city, and so injure the cause of the Young Turkey party in the interest of the reactionaries. A week later a discovery was made that precipitated the crisis. Said, while drawing up a statement of the principal points of the Constitution, to which the Sultan's signature was to be appended in token of adhesion, had altered a clause so as to leave the appointment of the Ministers of War and Marine to the Sultan, instead of to the Grand Vizier, as had been laid down by Midhat's Constitution. To leave the control of the army in the hands of the Sultan was to place more trust in his word than the Young Turks were willing to do. So the Committee, as guardian of the nation's hard-won liberty, gave the word that has to be obeyed. Said had to resign, and his Ministers of War and Marine were at once placed under arrest, as a precautionary measure.

On August 6, 1908, Kiamil Pasha was appointed Grand Vizier, and was allowed to choose his own ministers; of the members of Said's Ministry he retained but two, the Skeikh-ul-Islam and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The appointment of Kiamil was universally acclaimed. Able, firm and patriotic, with an honourable career behind him, he was a *persona grata* with men of

all races and creeds, and was the most popular statesman in Turkey. He had always been the steadfast friend of the English, and has many friends in this country. The gracious telegram of congratulation which King Edward VII sent on Kiamil's appointment produced a wonderful effect and did much to tighten the cordial relations between the two countries.

Kiamil is now about eighty-seven years of age. Throughout his long career this wise old man has shown himself incorrupt and a hater of corruption, a lover of justice, an advocate of reform, but moderate, unwilling to force radical changes on a people yet unripe, a man of wide knowledge, free from fanaticism and friendly to Europeans, while ready to protect his country against the undue influence in her internal affairs which has been exercised with such callous selfishness, to their own advantage and to Turkey's partial ruin, by certain Powers.

Six months before the outbreak of the revolution Kiamil was holding the important office of Vali of the province of Aidin, of which Smyrna, the commercial centre of the Levant, is the capital. Here for thirteen years he had won the confidence and affection of people of every class by the justice and usefulness of his administration. But the Camarilla ever hated a just and honest man, and Palace intrigue arranged for his destruction. He was falsely accused of being in



league with the brigands of Asia Minor; secret instructions were given for his arrest, and a steamer was sent to Smyrna to convey him as an exile to the island of Rhodes. Under the Despotism exiles died quickly, and Captain von Herbert, from whose description of the incident in the *Fortnightly Review* I have taken some of my facts, himself saw the canvas sack in which it was intended to drop Kiamil overboard during the voyage—the official account would doubtless have informed the world that the Pasha had died of sea-sickness. But fortunately Kiamil obtained knowledge of the order for his arrest, and on January 12 he hurried to the British Consulate at Smyrna, and there took refuge under the British flag. The Consul gladly received him, and got into telegraphic communication with London. Sir Edward Grey commanded that British protection should be extended to the Pasha, who as a native of Cyprus was technically entitled to claim it. The Consulate was surrounded by police and spies, the steamers in the port were closely watched; but, despite all the precautions that were taken, Kiamil was able to escape in the steam launch belonging to the well-known banking firm of the Whittals, and got safely on board a German liner bound for Stamboul. The steamer duly arrived at her destination; the British Ambassador guaranteed that Kiamil should have interviews with the Sultan at which

none of the Camarilla would be present; and the Pasha landed in the capital, thus placing himself in the power of the Despot; which was a brave thing to do when one bears in mind the fate of Midhat and others. Kiamil had his private interviews with Abdul Hamid, and spoke to him boldly concerning the evils of his rule, the ruin that was threatening the Ottoman Empire, and the corruption and villainy of the Sovereign's entourage. But the Camarilla still remained to exercise its mischievous power until the very end, though apparently it dared not interfere with one still nominally under the protection of England; for Kiamil did not disappear mysteriously. He kept outside public affairs and dwelt quietly in his house in Constantinople—no doubt under the close surveillance of spies—until the successful revolution brought him once again to the head of affairs.

During the first six months of the new *régime* that very critical period when the Constitution was menaced by foes within and without, and even the integrity of the Empire was at stake—Kiamil, as Grand Vizier, steered the ship of State safely through many dangers, and his shrewd and cautious diplomacy greatly strengthened the position of Turkey. His ministers, among whom were one Armenian and one Greek, were men whose characters were above reproach, and they did much to reform the machinery of their respec-

tive departments. Kiamil stood his country in good stead, and Turkey has good reason to be grateful to him; but he, too, after six months of office, had to resign, though with no loss of honour to himself, at the bidding of the Committee; and, as in the case of his predecessor Said Pasha, the question of the appointment of the Ministers of War and Marine was the immediate cause of the Cabinet crisis—a matter concerning which I shall say more in another chapter.

Kiamil's successor to the Grand Vizierate, Hilmi Pasha, is another man of the old *régime*. I have already spoken of the part which he took in Salonica during the last days of the Despotism, when the Committee threatened him with death. Long before any one thought that there was a chance of Hilmi's becoming Grand Vizier, he was described to me as being an honest and able man of strong character, with a good record behind him, somewhat fanatical, and with little sympathy with the Christian elements of the population. As Inspector-General in Salonica before the revolution, he obeyed the instructions given to him by the Palace, and obstructed as much as possible the reforms in Macedonia—dictated by the Great Powers—which it was his ostensible duty to superintend. But to stand in the way of European intervention was no grave fault in the eyes of the Young Turks. Though the officer of

KIAMIL PASHA. Turkey's veteran Statesman. He was Grand Vizier under the new Constitutional regime until February 13, 1909, when he resigned this office and was succeeded by Hilmi Pasha.



the Despotism, Hilmi's sympathies were with the cause of the reformers, and he is now trusted by them.

From the beginning, therefore, the Young Turks have placed at the head of the Government, not advanced reformers, not ambitious men out of their own ranks, but experienced men of the old *régime*, who, so far, have done well, and have been able on occasions to check hasty and ill-considered changes. In other respects, too, the Young Turks have manifested their moderation and wise opportunism. Foreign intervention is the thing that they detest and fear most, for it has worked nothing but ill for the Empire; but these men are free from any anti-European feeling, and while anxious, as soon as possible, to get rid of the Capitulations and other fetters which the Powers have placed upon Ottoman independence, they welcome European assistance to place their house in order. Thus it was at the request of the Turkish Government that France lent Turkey the aid of the great financial authority, M. Laurent, to assist in the reorganisation of the finances of the country and the establishment of less wasteful methods of tax collection, and that England lent the services of Mr. Crawford to conduct the reorganisation of the Customs. Turkey has also asked for, and has obtained, the services of an English admiral and several naval officers to help her recreate the navy which was

destroyed during the Hamidian *régime*, and Baron von der Goltz, who has already done so much good for the Turkish army, is to be entrusted with powers that will enable him to bring it up to a high state of efficiency. The Young Turks, anxious to develop the great natural resources of their country, have also borrowed from France excellent engineers, to superintend the construction of irrigation works and the execution of other useful projects.

While what is best of the old *régime* still supplies the higher officialdom, nearly all the men belonging to the lower grades of the Civil Service, as I have already pointed out, had become adherents of the Committee of Union and Progress some time before the outbreak of the revolution. Most of these men, under the corrupt system that then prevailed, had to supplement their miserable pay, generally in arrears, by taking bakshish and by robbing the State in other ways. This general impurity of the officialdom was loathsome to many of those who were compelled to follow the almost universal practice in order to keep themselves and their families alive. Minor officials knew that what was wrung from the people in the form of taxation was not spent for the country's good, but was for the most part appropriated by the Palace gang, and it was but natural that they helped themselves to a share.

But the Turks, in their dealings between man and man, are among the most honest of people, and public sentiment regarding official corruption has been undergoing a remarkable change since the revolution. The newspapers preached public purity, and the servants of the State began to realise that for the future the misappropriation of public moneys would not be at the cost of the Palace gang as heretofore, but at the cost of their beloved country itself, which was in sore need of money to further its regeneration and to strengthen its defences against the formidable enemies that threatened its integrity. I have told the story of the patriotic civil servants in Salonica, who abandoned their claims to arrears of pay in view of their country's necessities; I am assured that the same sense of civic virtue has led to a remarkable diminution of the corrupt practices in the various public departments. I have heard it maintained that the Turks cannot change their nature, and that Turkish administration always has been, and always will be, corrupt, whether the form of government be despotic or constitutional. One might as fairly have argued thus about our administration in India, or in the British Isles themselves, but a few generations ago. A people who, like the Turks, are honest as individuals, and intensely patriotic, are likely to arrive at the right moral sense in a matter like this. The

Japanese, who, while being as patriotic as the Turks, are not remarkable for commercial probity, regard it as far more criminal to embezzle the country's funds than to cheat the individual; but Japan is the only country which has attained this high ethical standard.

CHAPTER XVII

Effect of Austria's annexations—Reactionary intrigues—Panic in the capital—The mutinous Palace Guards—The Selamlik—The Committee's head-quarters in Constantinople—Some members of the Committee.

It is not within the scope of this work to deal with the foreign complications which followed the Turkish revolution. Suffice it to say that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the beginning of October had the effect of striking what might well have proved to be a deadly blow at the party of reform in Turkey. It was the old story of an ambitious Christian Power, fearing lest a reformed Turkey might become a strong Turkey, treacherously obstructing her path of progress. Austria's action gave the reactionaries their last chance of bringing back the old order of things, and they fully availed themselves of it. "These Young Turks," they were able to say to the people, "used the preservation of the integrity of the Empire as their watchword when they rebelled against the Padisha; and lo! the first thing that happens after they get the power is the complete separation from Turkey of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a declaration of independence on the part of the Bulgarians and a separatist move-

ment in Crete!" These arguments produced a considerable effect upon the ignorant, who blamed the reformers for what had happened and clamoured for rulers strong enough to protect Turkey against her foreign foes.

The reactionaries were wholly unscrupulous in their methods and were prepared to plunge their country into a disastrous war if by so doing they could restore the Despotism. Ex-spies and other reactionaries made demonstrations in favour of war with Austria in some of the mosques of the capital; they posted placards on the walls of the city by night, calling upon Mussulmans to massacre the Christians; and everywhere they attempted to foment disorder so as to discredit the Young Turk rule as leading to a state of anarchy. But the Young Turks knew that the preservation of peace abroad and order at home was of vital importance, and they displayed a firmness that soon made their position stronger than it had ever been.

In the first place, so as to overawe the reactionary party and the untrustworthy Yildiz soldiery, they garrisoned the capital with a large force of Macedonian troops loyal to the Constitution, who could be relied upon to suppress a rising in the firmest manner. Loyal troops were also employed to police the city; all reactionary assemblies were stopped and the agitators were cast into prison.

The machinations of the reactionaries, however, produced some effect. For a considerable time Constantinople was in an overwrought and nervous condition, and various incidents inspired the Christian inhabitants with a great dread of impending peril. These Greeks, Armenians, Levantines, and others, timid of nature after their ages of oppression, suffered from an epidemic of panic, acute fits of which were daily brought about by very small causes. Thus, one day at about this time, as I was walking through the Grand Bazaar in Stamboul I witnessed the following incident which showed the jumpy condition of the population. A man, revolver in hand, chased by soldiers and others, suddenly appeared, running at full speed through the crowded lanes of the Bazaar. This was quite enough to start a panic. Like wildfire spread the report that the Moslem mob, stirred up by the Softas, had at last commenced the massacre of the Christians. The scene was indeed an extraordinary one. Men and women turned pallid, wrung their hands, wept and howled, and there was a general stampede for the shelter of the houses. People ran into their own or other shops, doors were bolted, bars were drawn, shutters were closed, and in a trice what had become a busy mart had become empty and silent as a city of the dead, and remained so until Sami Pasha, the Minister of Police, came down to reassure the frightened

Greek and Armenian traders. It turned out that the origin of this widespread panic was merely the endeavouring of a vendor of contraband tobacco to escape from the soldiers who had been sent to arrest him.

On another morning the terrifying rumour spread from end to end of the city that the Second Division of the Imperial Guard, stationed at the Tashkishla Barracks, outside the Yildiz Palace, had mutinied under the leadership of the reactionaries, and were engaged in a sanguinary struggle with the Constitutional troops from Salonica. The facts had been grossly exaggerated but the incident was significant enough. This Second Division of the Imperial Guard, about seven thousand strong, including the Sultan's faithful Albanian Bodyguard, had for its post the neighbourhood of the Yildiz Palace. These troops, officered by men risen from their own ranks, who protected the person of the Sultan, had been ever pampered and spoilt; their discipline was very slack and their loyalty to the Constitution was doubtful. Consequently the Minister of War, who by virtue of a recent *Iradé* was empowered for the first time to despatch the regiments of this favoured Division to any part of the Empire, decided to remove by degrees from Constantinople some of the battalions of the Division and to replace them with loyal, well-disciplined troops from Salonica. So in the first

place two battalions of the Yildiz Guards, to the great disgust of the men, were ordered to those disagreeable stations, the Hedjaz and Yemen, in distant Arabia, where they could work no mischief. Eighty-eight of the men, who had but three months more to serve with the colours, claimed their immediate discharge and clamoured to be sent to their homes. As this request was not granted they mutinied and, coming out of their barracks, fired upon the Salonica troops who had come to replace them. The fire was returned, three sergeants among the mutineers were shot dead, others were wounded, and the remainder were captured. The Commandant of the Guards Corps then called out several regiments of the Guards, formed them in a hollow square, and addressed them briefly, explaining to them that the Government, while determined to improve the lot of all Turkish soldiers, would punish severely any act of indiscipline. The prisoners, many of whom begged for mercy, crying out that they had been led astray by others, were brought within the square, and the Commandant told them that they would be tried by Court-martial. The ringleaders were afterwards shot. The troops of the Imperial Guard on numerous previous occasions had displayed a similar mutinous spirit; but the timid authorities had always overlooked the most flagrant breaches of discipline and yielded to the clamour of the men.

The prompt and firm action taken by the Minister of War on this occasion cut short what might have developed into a serious revolt, and reassured the timid civilian population. It was recognised that this was no time for those in power to display weakness.

The Palace troops had thus been taught a useful lesson, and the Committee of Union and Progress still further secured its position by seeing to it that the bulk of the Imperial Guards battalions were scattered in sections over different parts of the Empire. Moreover, the General commanding the Second Division, a friend of the Sultan's, was forced to retire from the army, and the command was given to an officer known to be loyal to the Constitution. Steps were also taken to introduce a better class of officer into the remaining Yildiz regiments. The Committee showed that it was determined to be the master. The General commanding the Cavalry Division of Guards and several other officers were imprisoned for agitating against the proposed supersession of officers who had been promoted from the ranks by those who had passed through the military academies; and other officers of the Yildiz garrison were severely punished for attempting to cause disaffection among the rank and file in the interests of the reactionary party. The Committee won the admiration and confidence of all right-thinking men by the way in which

it exercised its great power for the country's good.

It was very interesting to be in Constantinople during that critical time and to watch the replacement of the old order of things by the new, to see constitutional government developing itself before one's eyes within the space of days instead of centuries. Everywhere one could contemplate the old and new facing each other in strong contrast, and to attend, as I did on the Friday following the military mutiny, the Selamlik in the morning and visit the head-quarters of the Committee of Union and Progress in the afternoon, was to rush, as it were on Mr. Wells' "time machine," from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century.

Every tourist who visits Constantinople has witnessed the Selamlik, the Sultan's procession from the Yildiz Palace on each Friday to worship at the Hamidieh Mosque, and the ceremony has been described many times. This particular Friday's ceremony had a special interest, and the spectacle was one to make one think. I joined the throng of foreigners at the gates of the Yildiz, and awaited the passing of the procession. Here, from the steep hill, there is a beautiful view which forms a wonderful setting to the solemn function. In the immediate foreground, but a couple of hundred yards or so distant, is the white mosque itself; to the right stretch the heights on which Pera stands; below is the gleaming Bosphorus;

and beyond it are the misty mountains of Asia, forming a noble background to the scene. There was much of interest to look upon as one awaited the coming out of the Sultan—among other things the gathering of the picturesque Moslem crowd; the arrival of successive detachments of troops with bands playing and colours flying in the breeze; and the massing of the troops along the short line of route and on the open space beyond. A greater number of troops than usual, about eight thousand men, were brought out on this occasion, and after the ceremony they were paraded and marched to the Palace, at a window of which the Sultan stood and acknowledged their salute. I watched the troops of all arms march up to the Palace, the tough-looking, red-fezzed, blue-coated Infantry of the Line; Artillery; Cavalry; Marines; and Engineers. There were troops, too, from every part of the Ottoman Empire, including the fierce and faithful Albanians of the Prætorian Guard, in white uniforms fashioned after their national dress, with wicked-looking yataghans slung across their waists; and Arabian troops in queer uniforms and green turbans; and they looked like what they indeed are, as formidable as any soldiery in the world when properly trained and led. It was a sign of the times that the first regimental band to arrive on the scene began to play, not the National Anthem, but the "March of Liberty," which had

been composed specially for the troops of the new *régime*, and the sound of it must have been scarcely pleasing to some ears within the Palace walls.

At last the *muezzin* from the minaret of the mosque chanted the call of the faithful to prayer, and the procession, passing through the Palace gates, slowly proceeded down the steep road, between the troops, to the entrance of the mosque, the Sultan's approach being announced by the blowing of a trumpet and the shouting by the soldiers "*Padishahim chok yasha!*" ("long live the Emperor!"). I need not describe the well-known scene; there were, as usual, the officers in gorgeous uniforms; high officials of the Palace and the Government, among whom one recognised some few of the old *régime*, but none of the notorious instruments of oppression and cruelty, or the corrupt advisers who had ruined their country (for, happily, all these had gone, some having fled from the people's wrath to England, others living under close watch on the island of Prinkipo, and others prisoners in the Seraskeriat); the led saddle horses; the white-veiled Mohammedan ladies of the Palace in close carriages; the ungainly black eunuchs walking with folded arms, not so insolent as of old, and no doubt fearful as to what might happen to them under the new *régime* which had done away with their mischievous influence; and, lastly, escorted

by mounted troops, in an open carriage, with the Grand Vizier facing him, came he who is the head of the Moslem world, the nominal ruler of the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan Abdul Hamid himself, his face imperturbable as he acknowledged the salute and trained acclamation of his legionaries. But it was a procession in which one seemed to be looking at the shadow of that from which Turkey has now delivered herself; one felt that all this pomp was but the empty shell of that which is now a dead thing.

Then, in the afternoon, I visited the headquarters of the Young Turk party in Stamboul. Having crossed the Golden Horn by the Galata Bridge, and traversed the intricate lanes of the Grand Bazaar, I came to a quiet street of somewhat mean appearance, and in an unpretentious house, almost bare of furniture, I found the temporary meeting-place of the Committee of Union and Progress, the virtual Government of the Ottoman Empire. Here there was no pomp or ceremony; one might have been in the offices of some struggling architect in a third-rate London suburb. There was a room in which members of the organisation met in an informal manner to discuss their plans, and to put forth those suggestions which had to be obeyed by the ministers. There were other rooms in which men awaited their turn to have interviews with members of the Committee, and chambers in which one might

carry on long conversations, as I did on several occasions, with courteous Young Turks ready to impart all such information regarding this wonderful movement as it was not deemed inexpedient to divulge.

I found these young Mussulmans who had freed Turkey quite unlike the conventional conspirators and revolutionaries. These were well-educated and thoughtful men, keen and energetic, with the light of resolve and great hope in their eyes betraying the enthusiasm which lay under their Turkish reserve and phlegm. The more I saw of the Young Turks the more I was impressed by their patriotism, their manliness and their sincerity. There are naturally some over-confident Chauvinists in the party, but the bulk are men of shrewd common-sense, as has been made manifest to the world by their moderation after victory, and their tactful methods of conducting the government of a disorganised country, and maintaining order throughout the Empire in the face of tremendous difficulties of every description.

All the members of the Committee of Union and Progress with whom I came into contact, whether in the capital or in Salonica, whether soldiers or civilians, were enlightened men, most of whom had travelled and studied in Western Europe, and had assimilated what is best of Western culture. Thus among the civilian members of the Committee are men who would gain distinc-

tion in any country, such as Ahmed Riza, for many years the chief organiser of the Young Turk movement in Paris, the President of the Chamber; Djavid Bey, the professor; Aassim Bey, the strenuous editor of the *Shura-i-Ummet*, the official organ of the Committee, who took a leading part in preparing the revolution in Salonica; Rahmi Bey, a wealthy Salonican who was long in exile, a descendant of the Saracen warrior who conquered Thessalonika from the Latins five hundred years ago. The military members of the Committee, officers of the *état-major*, have passed through the military schools, or have been educated in France or Germany, and most of them, like the civilian members, speak foreign languages. Among them are distinguished men like Colonel Faik Bey, and Enver Bey, now the popular hero of the Turks. Another member of the Committee is Turkey's ablest artillery officer, General Hassan Riza Pasha, an old friend of mine in a way, for I discovered, on talking to him, that he was with the Epirus army during the Greek war, and that it was under the uncomfortable fire of his guns that I remained with the eccentric, but harmless, Greek army on the heights of Arta, and on one occasion narrowly escaped being killed by one of his shells.

The Sultan ABDUL HAMID at the Selamlik.



CHAPTER XVIII

The Committee prepares the country for self rule—The Committee's Congress in Salonica—Reasons for its continued existence—Election of the secret Central Committee—The Greek ideal—Importance of Moslem supremacy—The Committee's election campaign—Propagandism in the theatre.

DURING the interregnum the most important task that had to be undertaken by the Committee of Union and Progress, and one that caused it a good deal of anxiety for a while, was the preparation of the country for the coming general election of the members of Turkey's new Parliament. It could not but be a dangerous experiment thus suddenly to give self-governing institutions to the ignorant Ottoman masses, who had endured thirty years of the worst of despotisms. It would naturally take long to make the peasantry understand that under the new order of things taxation would not be as it was under the old, that the money supplied by the people would be spent in reorganising and developing the country to their own great benefit. All that they knew of taxation was that it had been wrung from them to enrich the ruling clique, that Constantinople swallowed up the huge sums which were collected

in every part of the Empire, and that little had been done for the people. It was difficult to convince them that taxation could possibly be for their own good. To quote from an article which appeared at the time in a Constantinople paper: "Persuasion in this case will be of no avail. Acts must precede arguments. Let works of public utility, roads, railways, harbours, irrigation canals, be undertaken at once. Let the police be organised. Let the troops in the provinces receive their pay and be given their proper clothing and equipment as in the capital." If they beheld these changes, so advantageous to themselves, the people would no doubt gradually lose their profound distrust of everything connected with the administration of the State and realise that the sacrifices entailed by taxation might mean the return to the taxpayers, in the form of various benefits, of tenfold what they had contributed. When the elections did take place it was found that great numbers of the poorer and more ignorant peasants, though as taxpayers entitled to vote, refrained from exercising their right, for they suspected the needful registration of being in some way connected with the exaction of further taxation.

In the meanwhile, people, prejudiced against all outward form of government and wholly ignorant of the elements of economics, suddenly found themselves the free electors of a representative

assembly. Many people looked forward to the opening of the Parliament with grave misgivings. It is rankest heresy in these days to give utterance to such a sentiment, but one could not help thinking last autumn, when the result of the elections was still in doubt, that it might have been better to have continued the rule of the country for some time longer through a Ministry selected by the Young Turk oligarchy, and not to have conferred self-governing institutions on the people until these had been to some extent educated by the object-lessons of good government presented to them—the suppression of corruption, the efficiency of public departments, the bringing of prosperity to the wasted land, the wise expenditure on public works.

But it had been decreed that the Parliament should meet as soon as possible, so the Committee of Union and Progress set itself to teach the electorate the duties of citizenship, to explain to them what constitutional government meant, and to employ its wide-reaching organisation to secure so strong a representation of its nominees in the Lower House as to give the Committee the control of affairs. The Young Turks were too wise to be over confident. They realised the difficulties and dangers before them. They knew that the reactionaries were intriguing everywhere and would seize their chance when they got it. The Young Turks remained on their guard,

determined that the liberty so hardly won should not be wrested from Turkey as it was in 1878, and that if the Turkish Parliament failed as the Russian Duma failed, it should not be to make way for the return of the Despotism.

It was recognised that, far from losing its *raison d'être* with the opening of Parliament, the Young Turk organisation would be needed more than ever for the protection of the country, and would have to continue its existence, with the army behind it as heretofore, for a long while to come. The Committee of Union and Progress therefore held a Congress in Salonica in October, at which measures were taken to strengthen and effect the closer knitting together of the Young Turk party. It was arranged that all the Deputies in the Turkish Parliament who were nominees of the Committee should pledge themselves to support in its entirety the programme laid down by the Committee. Arrangements were made for the establishment of close relations between the Committee and the Army. The secret Central Committee, the names of whose members are unknown to the outer world, was re-elected at the Congress, but it was decided that it should no longer have its head-quarters in Salonica and that it should not hold its meetings in Constantinople. It was to have no known or fixed habitation. The Young Turks, therefore, apparently deemed it more necessary than ever

that strict secrecy should be observed as to who their real leaders were. By this time the Committee had largely extended its membership, its sworn associates numbering about seventy thousand—all that was best of the Ottoman manhood.

As the result of the electoral campaign conducted by the Committee of Union and Progress their nominees are in an overwhelming majority in the Turkish House of Commons, voting as one man on all important questions. The Constitution arranged for the creation of a Senate, or Second Chamber, composed of notables selected by the Sultan. The Committee saw to it that the Senate should not become the head-quarters of reaction. It presented a list of names to the Sultan, who was pleased to appoint as Senators the persons thus suggested to him. A parliament, the bulk of whose members are sworn to obey the bidding of a secret society, may not be an ideal form of government; but there can be little doubt that it was the best possible one for Turkey during the early days of the new *régime*, when it was necessary for the very existence of the Empire that one strong and patriotic party should dominate the House and present a united front to foreign foe and home reactionary. It was no time for parliamentary dissensions, for the raising of delicate questions concerning the future position of the various races, with their conflicting aspirations, or

for the discussion of the schemes of thoroughgoing decentralisation advocated by the too broad-minded theorists who would grant home rule all round to Turkey's various peoples.

The Turks were novices at political combination, whereas the Greeks were skilled in electioneering trickery of every sort and were determined to obtain as large an electioneering representation as possible in Parliament. The Greeks undoubtedly entertained the opinion that, representing the brains and commercial wealth of Turkey, they should take a leading place, above all the other elements of the population, in the administration of the country. The Committee of Union and Progress was not of this opinion, and under its guidance the votes of the Mussulmans, largely supported by the Armenian and Jewish vote, secured the ascendency in Parliament of the ruling race.

It is a fortunate thing for Turkey that the people who conquered this land will still maintain their political supremacy under the Constitution. The situation would be a dangerous one indeed were the Greek vote ever to swamp that of the Mussulmans at the elections. Another revolution, not of so bloodless a character as the last, would be the probable result. It is obvious that for the Caliph, the head of the Mussulman faith, to be under the direction of a Christian Government would be intolerable to the millions

of fanatical Moslem subjects of the Porte in Asia, who already regard the Constitution with great suspicion. It is absurd to suppose, too, that the Young Turk party and the Mussulman Turkish Army have overthrown despotism only to hand over the rule of the country to what, for centuries, have been the subject-races. The Turks hold the inconsistent, but perfectly justifiable, point of view that all Ottomans, of whatever race and creed, shall have equal rights, but that the predominance of the Mussulman Turks must be safe-guarded. This may not be logic, but it is common-sense.

The opinions and misgivings of the Young Turks, while the elections were in progress, were expressed as follows, in an article which appeared in one of their organs in the capital: "The Mussulman element is the one which, above all others, works to maintain the Empire's safety and integrity. The other elements have, more or less, other ends in view. If we now deliver the government of the country into the hands of the non-Mussulmans, who can suppose that these would have Ottoman interests as their one aim? It is evident, therefore, that under present conditions, if we wish to safeguard our national existence, we must keep the government in our own hands, and be on the watch lest the other elements snatch it from us. But it must not be gathered from the opinions which we have thus

expressed that we intend to refuse to place the other elements on the same footing of equality as the Mussulman element—that we wish to deprive them of their political rights. To make sure of a majority in the Parliament is a question of life and death for the Turks. It will not do for us to take it for granted that the Turks are certain to obtain a majority in Parliament because they compose a majority of the population. We state it with regret, that the bulk of the Mussulmans, not realising the importance of the elections, have not even taken the trouble to vote, and that those who have voted have not come to an understanding with each other, and have, therefore, failed to send an adequate number of Deputies to the Chamber. It would be interesting to know what line of action we ought to adopt if we found ourselves in a Chamber containing a majority of non-Mussulman Deputies. The laws made by such a Chamber would not favour the dominant element. Let us suppose, for example, that the Greeks were in a strong majority in the Ottoman Parliament, and that the question of the annexation of Crete to Greece was under discussion. How many Greek Deputies would disapprove of that annexation? And again, if the Bulgarians had the majority, what would happen to Macedonia? The Turks, who conquered the country at the cost of a great sacrifice, have proved that, with regard to the position of

the other elements, they are guided by the sentiments of equality, justice and liberty, but they will not tolerate the formation of a State within a State. Our non-Mussulman compatriots, who desire to live as brothers with the Mussulmans, must calmly examine their hearts and consciences. Let them have the courage to tear from their hearts all ideas—if they entertain such—which are prejudicial to the interests of the Turkish rule, and let them, without fear, throw themselves into our arms. They have nothing to fear from us; all that is asked of them is that they make us believe in their sincerity. But, whatever may be said in this country, it is the Turks who compose, and who will always compose, the dominant element."

The Committee, therefore, set itself diligently to work to secure the ascendency of its adherents in Parliament. It selected as its nominees the best men it could find, who commanded the respect of the people, for the most part professional men in towns, and landed proprietors in the country; and it undertook the education of the voters in the exercise of their new privileges. It sent missionaries throughout the country to preach the cause of the Constitution, and to confute the arguments of the reactionary agents. It founded schools of political instruction in the villages. Its lecturers addressed attentive crowds in city streets. Even the theatres were used for

the dissemination of political doctrines, and both in Constantinople and Salonica I attended plays written with the object of showing the horrors of the Despotism and the blessings of liberty under constitutional government.

One night I visited a Turkish theatre in Pera, where a company of amateurs—Young Turks, several of whom were officers in the army, whilst the others had either recently been released from prison or had returned from exile—presented a patriotic play entitled *The Awakening of Turkey*. In this remarkable play, though fictitious names appeared on the programme, nearly all the characters impersonated were well-known men, creatures of the Palace, reformers and others, and whenever an actor appeared on the scene so good was his make-up that the audience at once knew who was intended, and received him with warm applause or cries and groans of execration, as the case might be. The play opened with a sort of prologue—"the Pasha's dream." The curtain rose and disclosed a room in which a white-bearded old man was sleeping in an arm-chair. He was recognised by the audience as a well-known victim of the Despotism. The Pasha, as he slept, dreamt a vivid dream, which now unfolded itself before us. The back of the room faded away, and we looked into the interior of a luxuriously furnished chamber in the Yildiz Palace. And here, in dumb show, were

enacted before us some of the evil doings of the Camarilla that is no more. There we saw, made up to the life, the Sultan's hated Secretary, Izzet Pasha, and to judge from his reception by the audience he is safer in his English house than he would be in Constantinople. There, too, were the Sultan's aged astrologer, Abdul Houda, and other Court favourites. Spies came in with lists of denounced reformers, and orders for execution or for the *oubliette* were signed. The tyrants bethought themselves to seek recreation in the intervals of their cruel business, so the hideous and fawning black eunuchs were ordered to bring in a troupe of beautiful Armenian dancing girls. A young Turk in chains was led in, tortures were applied to him in vain to wring from him the betrayal of his associates; so he was put to death there and then by the Court executioner, in the presence of his wife, who was on her knees imploring for mercy, and frantic with grief, while the callous Court favourites, with scarce a side glance at the bloody deed, continued to gaze with gloating eyes at the dance of the slave girls. Then a messenger came in with news that was evidently of importance. He opened the box which he had brought with him, and to the joy of the courtiers drew out the bleeding head of the murdered Midhat Pasha.

Then the vision faded away, and the Pasha awoke from his nightmare. It had deeply affected

him, and in a long speech he announced his intention of fleeing from Turkey to Paris in order that he might help to organise the revolution by which Turkey must be saved. His son entered, was delighted to hear the Pasha's resolve, and agreed to accompany him. The scenes of the play itself were laid in Paris. We heard plots being arranged by spies in the Turkish Embassy in the French capital, and saw them circumvented by an *attaché* of the Embassy, who happened to be a secret adherent of the Young Turk party. We witnessed the deathbed of the Pasha, who had abandoned wife and property for the sake of his country, and who, in a long speech, urged his son to persevere in the good work. We were taken to a Mussulman burial ground, where an eloquent funeral oration was delivered over the remains of the dead patriot, and we witnessed his apotheosis when angels bore him upwards to Paradise. The final scene represented a somewhat extraordinary entertainment at the Turkish Embassy, where a good deal of champagne was being drunk; suddenly, in rushed a news-boy carrying a poster announcing the proclamation of the Constitution; and the curtain dropped on the group of revelling spies, now overwhelmed with fear and consternation.

It was a gloomy play, mainly made up of long and earnest monologues, lit up occasionally with flashes of grim humour, but its effect upon the

audience was extraordinary. The actors who represented the friends of liberty delivered, with great oratorical power, eloquent speeches, in which they preached the righteousness of the cause, and the beauty of sacrifice of self for the fatherland. They swayed the audience as they willed; for these were not merely clever actors who felt their parts, but men who had done, and were still doing, in real life, the things that they represented upon the stage. The audience hung upon their words, warmly applauded the patriotic sentiments, and showed their detestation of the tyrants and their pity for the sufferers. There were tears in the eyes of many men present, to whom, no doubt, the play recalled bitter memories. The audience was almost exclusively composed of Mussulman Turks—soldiers, theological students, turbanned *hodjas*, and others. In the higher-priced seats were many officers of the army and navy, and two near relatives of the Sultan were in the boxes.

CHAPTER XIX

The programme of the Young Turk party—The need of a strong army—The development of Turkey's resources—Taxation—The political programme of the Committee of Union and Progress—The Turkish electoral law—The elections—The attitude of the Greeks.

For some time before the elections for the Turkish Parliament took place, the Committee of Union and Progress was at great pains to explain its programme as fully and clearly as was possible to the people. From the articles which appeared in the newspapers of the party and the conversations which could be had without difficulty with members of the Committee one was able to form a fairly complete conception of the principal aims of the reformers. The title of the Committee, "Union and Progress," well sums up these aims. Turkey is to be made strong and free, respected by the nations, first by *union*—by the union of all natives of Turkey of whatsoever creed or race. They are to enjoy equal rights. No advantage is to be given to any religion. The Young Turks announced that this tolerance was not to be merely a passive one, that where Christian populations had no churches or schools

these would be provided for them at the expense of the State, and that in these schools the teaching of such national languages as Albanian or Servian would be permitted. In the second place, Turkey is to be made strong by *progress*—the regeneration of a people whose energies have been sterilised by a long oppression, the restoration of prosperity to an impoverished land. The people are to be educated, and the vast resources of the country are to be developed.

Instead of dreaming of impossible social reforms, the Young Turks have very practical ends in view. In the first place, they recognise that it is essential to the existence of Turkey that she should possess a strong army, as otherwise her very progress may prove her ruin, arousing the cupidity of those of her neighbours who have already divided among them so much of her rich land. So Turkey, having no desire to sow that others may reap, is determined to create an army equal in strength to that of any of the great military Powers. To possess such an army the Turks are prepared to make great sacrifices. The exemption from conscription enjoyed by certain cities and districts will be withdrawn gradually. The Moslems will no longer bear the whole burden of the conscription; for the future the Christians also will have to serve in the army, and the view of the Turkish Generals with whom I have spoken is that there should be no formation

of exclusively Moslem or exclusively Christian regiments, but that men of different creeds should be mingled in each unit. The Greeks, who want all the rights of Ottoman citizenship without its obligations, entertain a strong objection to service in the Turkish army.

But Turkey cannot maintain a great army without money, and money she can only obtain by developing her vast mineral and agricultural resources with foreign capital. Under the old *régime* Court intrigue made all industrial enterprise precarious, and foreign capitalists were chary of ventures in a country where rights of property were so insecure. But by means of the good government which the Young Turks are introducing they hope to gain the confidence of foreign investors. They realise that, to quote from a Constantinople paper, "Turkey cannot have reform without money or money without reform; foreign capital she must have in order to carry out the reforms, and foreign capital will not come in until there is a satisfactory assurance that the reforms will be carried out, that the money provided will be spent properly and not be stolen and wasted as it was under the old *régime*."

The programme of the more necessary reforms was set forth with some detail by the Press of the Young Turk party during its electioneering campaign, and the abolition of the old corrupt system of administration, whereby bribery and

bakshish had to supplement the inadequate pay —often years in arrears—of the servants of the State, was of course insisted upon. The following are among the more important of the projects recommended by the Young Turk party:—(1) The construction of many thousands of miles of roads to open out the country; at the present time some of the railway lines are of very little service, as roads to bring to them the produce of the neighbouring country at moderate cost are wanting. (2) The construction of four thousand kilometres of railway; certain railways are urgently needed if the enormous mineral wealth of the country is to be developed by foreign capital; the difficulties of transport now prohibit mining enterprise in most richly mineralised districts. (3) The bringing under cultivation again of the formerly productive arable districts in the Vilayets of Salonica, Smyrna, etc. (4) The construction of commercial ports at Dedeaghatch, Samsoun, Mersina, etc. (5) The construction of irrigation works in Mesopotamia and elsewhere; there are thousands of square miles of uncultivated land in Turkey only awaiting irrigation to make them exceedingly productive. (6) The engaging of French engineers to make navigable waterways of the Vardar, Maritza, Boyana, and Kizil-Irmak. (7) The foundation of an engineering college, coupled with a scheme for sending students who have gained diplomas to Europe to gain practical

knowledge. (8) The formation of navigation, commercial, and industrial companies, with the object of forwarding the prosperity of the country.

It is outside the scope of this book to deal with the complicated question of Turkey's financial position, which, according to the experts, is not so unsatisfactory as was at first supposed; but there are, of course, immense difficulties to be overcome before Turkey can see herself fairly started on the road of progress. The late *régime* burdened her with obligations which stand in the way of all attempts at reform; but these obstacles might be removed by the co-operation of the Powers interested. Whenever some measure for Turkey's good is proposed there seems to jump up some capitulation or some privileged interest of one Power or another to block it hopelessly. The Bagdad railway concession, for example, with its kilometric guarantee, is like a millstone round the neck of Turkey.

The Young Turks recognised that if their country was to be regenerated and to take its place among the nations the revenues would have to be greatly increased with the least possible delay. As to ways and means, the following may be taken as summing up some of the views which I heard expressed by Turks and others whose opinion carries weight. In the first place (in view of the attitude taken by the more

ignorant Parliamentary electors, who maintained that under the Constitution no taxes could be demanded of them) it may be impolitic to make any increase in the direct taxation of the country. The people, however, should be compelled to pay such direct taxes as are now in force until some better system has been devised, and the persons—and they are numerous—who by exercise of undue influence or otherwise have succeeded in avoiding the payment of their taxes should be forced to contribute like the others.

It is held, however, that whereas the direct taxes should be left as they are, reforms being made in the method of collection, several new sources of revenue could be tapped in the way of indirect taxation. In the first place, all the existing methods of raising indirect taxation should be maintained in their integrity, while the revenue derived from them should be largely increased by administrative reforms. For example, it has been calculated that the reorganisation of the Turkish Customs under the advice of the English expert, Mr. Crawford, will increase the revenue derived from the Customs by twenty-five per cent. Thinking men in Turkey recommend, not only the maintenance of the existing Customs tariff and other methods of indirect taxation, but also the imposition of still heavier taxation of this description until Turkey has been extricated from her present financial difficulties; and they also

favour the creation of several new monopolies, to be preceded, naturally, by an amelioration in the conditions of the existing tobacco, salt, and other monopolies.

The very mention of monopolies is shocking to most economists, but political economy is not an exact science, and there are many exceptions even to the most widely accepted of its rules. Turkey must have money. The foreign capital necessary to develop her resources hesitates to come in, waiting to see its security. A monopoly affords that security and tempts capital as nothing else will. The English business men to whom I spoke in Turkey regarded the granting of monopolies for comparatively short terms as expedient under the present conditions in Turkey; for not only does this fostering of large industries provide employment for many people, but—what is of the utmost importance to Turkey at the present moment—it will also bring to the Turkish Government, without any expenditure on its part, an immediate and considerable revenue.

As the time for the Parliamentary elections drew near the Committee of Union and Progress published its political programme, and to this all candidates who were nominees of the Committee were bound to adhere. The following were among the more important of the Committee's demands:—that the Cabinet should be responsible to the Chamber of Deputies; that Turkish should

remain the official language of the Empire; that the different races should have equal rights; that non-Moslems should be liable to military service; that the term of military service should be reduced; that peasants who had no land should be assisted to procure land, but not at the expense of the present landowners; that education should be free and compulsory.

It was deeply interesting to be in Turkey during the elections, to watch the Young Turks zealously conducting their campaign to serve what they considered to be their country's interests, and the people themselves puzzling out the meaning of this new Western innovation, the Constitution, and balancing the arguments of rival canvassers. The representatives of the Committee of Union and Progress were prepared to discuss patiently the intentions of the party with any group of electors that came to consult them, and while promising concessions to just demands, they did not attempt to catch votes by making wild promises which could never be fulfilled. Thus, when the Armenians—who have proved their loyalty to the Constitution and have not harassed the Government with unjustifiable grievances—asked that the lands which had been taken from the Armenians by the Kurds should be returned to the rightful owners, the Committee, realising that in practical politics there must be a law of prescription even for the raider, and not

wishing to have a Kurd question added to the numerous other difficulties which were confronting Turkey, suggested that it would be wiser to leave the turbulent Kurds in possession of what they seized some time ago and to compensate the Armenians by giving them at least equally good lands in the once productive tracts which have long been lying fallow and deserted. On the other hand, the Committee could not assent to the proposal of the Arabians that the use of the Arab tongue should be permitted in the debates of the Chamber of Deputies. To Christians of all sects it promised that there would be no interference with their churches, language, education, and laws of marriage and inheritance; but refused to consider the question of complete administrative decentralisation, or of autonomy, for any portion of the Empire.

On the other hand, the agents of the reactionary party—the party of those who had fattened under the old *régime* of plunder and were loth to see the profitable abuses swept away—worked hard to influence the electors, but apparently with little effect in European Turkey and Asia Minor. Certain foolish agitators who were infected with some of the socialistic doctrines of Western Europe unwittingly helped the cause of the reactionaries by raising the election cry of "No more taxes for the people" and "Down with all monopolies." I have explained that the more

ignorant people thought that with the suppression of the late *régime* there would be an end of all authority. When they were enlightened on this matter by the Young Turks, and discovered that they would be compelled to pay their taxes as heretofore they felt some disappointment, and this afforded an opportunity to the reactionaries to point out to them that they would be no better off under the Constitution than they had been before, and that, at any rate, Turkey, under the old *régime*, had been a Mussulman State, whereas under the new order of things the government would be in the hands of bad Mohammedans, Christians and Jews.

In Arabia and in other parts of Asia the efforts of the friends of the old *régime*, as might be expected, were attended with some success. The fanatical Arabs, who have never been reconciled to the Turkish rule, were impressed by the preachings of those who in the mosques denounced the Constitution, and declared that the Turks, who had ever been indifferent Mussulmans, had now abandoned the essential doctrines of Islam and were worse than the Christians and Jews with whom they associated.

But with the other races of the Empire it was still—in those early days of liberty—harmony, fraternisation and enthusiasm; the racial and religious differences appeared to be forgotten for awhile; one read of elections in which Christians

were voting for Mussulman candidates or Mussulmans for Christian candidates. The optimistic Minister of the Interior, Haki Bey, made the following statement: "In our Parliament there will be no Turkish, Armenian, Greek or Jew Deputies; they will all be Ottoman Deputies." If one judged from the appearance of the surface one would have concluded that the proclaimed ideal of the Young Turk party—the union of peoples of all races and creeds within the Empire—was in a fair way to being realised.

The Turkish election law—which is now being revised—defines so vaguely the qualifications for a voter that a good deal of misunderstanding arose. Thus the Greek farmers in Epirus clamoured for the franchise, which had been denied to them on the ground that they were not taxpayers, the tithes being paid, not by them, but by the owners of the land. The Greeks maintained that, as this tax is calculated on the produce of the soil and not on the rent paid, the farmers were virtually the taxpayers and therefore entitled to vote. To decide what constituted a taxpayer in the eyes of the election law must have puzzled the brains of many a Turkish official at this time, especially when he had before him some cunning and plausibly argumentative Greek, determined to have his vote by hook or by crook. In an amusing case which was brought before my notice an importunate person was allowed to vote in his

capacity as a taxpayer, though the only proof that he was such lay in the fact that he had on his back a coat made of a foreign cloth, which, if not smuggled, must have contributed to taxation in the form of Customs duties as it entered the country. The Turkish equivalents to our revising barristers had plenty of work to do in all the constituencies between Macedonia and Bagdad. It reminded one pleasingly of home to read of these things; but there were differences to be noticed here and there between the British and Turkish frame of mind during a General Election. For example, the Turkish electorate appears to be somewhat more exacting than ours, and it was announced that at Gumuldjina the *imams*, carrying the sacred banners from the mosques, assembled with ten thousand Mohammedans in front of the Municipality, to protest against the nomination as parliamentary candidates of "*obscure and undistinguished individuals.*"

The following are the more important features of the electoral regulations under the existing law. The elections are quadrennial. Roughly speaking fifty thousand voters are represented by one member of Parliament. There are two classes of electors: each group of about five hundred electors of the first class selects an elector of the second class, and the electors of the second class nominate and elect the Deputies. The following are among the qualifications for the franchise: An elector

must be a male Ottoman subject, over twenty-five years of age ; he must be a payer of direct taxes ; he must have lived a year in the district in which he exercises his right of voting, and must produce a certificate from the *moukhtar* of his former place of domicile showing that he is entitled to vote ; *employés* of the State and officers in the army, from the rank of lieutenant upwards, have the right to vote in whatever electoral districts they may happen to be during the elections ; soldiers on furlough can vote in their own districts. A man is disqualified from voting if he has been condemned for a crime, if he is an undischarged bankrupt, if his character is notoriously bad, if he is acting as servant to another individual, if he has represented himself as being of other than Ottoman nationality. A Deputy must be over thirty years of age, must know the Turkish language, and must possess the qualifications of an elector. A good many of these regulations were not insisted on rigidly at the recent elections ; for example there are several Deputies who cannot speak Turkish.

The electoral laws provide heavy punishments for those who employ violence, intimidation, or corruption at elections. By Article 72 of the Constitution the penalty for influencing elections by false statements and calumnies is a fine of forty pounds and a period of imprisonment of from one year up to five years, according to the gravity

of the offence; so it would be a dangerous thing in Turkey for partisans to post the walls with cartoons such as those which have exerted no small influence at General Elections in England. Another curious regulation, the object of which is to prevent rioting, compels the elector to return to his home as soon as he has registered his vote. It is also laid down that electors, before they drop their voting papers into the urn, must attend the prayers of the *imam* (or priest in the case of a Christian voter) for the prolongation of the Sultan's life and the increase of his glory.

In the late autumn, throughout the Turkish Empire, the elections took place. Turks, Albanians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Wallachs, Armenians, Jews, Latins, Arabs, Syrians, Kurds, Druses, elected their Deputies to a Chamber which represents so many races, interests, creeds and languages that Turkey's new Parliament in all probability would have been a Babel of vain talk and no doing had it not been that the cause of the Committee of Union and Progress triumphed in European Turkey and in Anatolia, and secured many adherents in other parts of the Empire, with the result that the nominees of the Committee formed a large majority in the Chamber.

I was in Constantinople during the election operations, and very interesting and picturesque they were. On the night preceding the polling

the big drums were beating loudly in the Turkish quarters of the capital to remind the electors that it was their duty as good citizens of a free country to go on the morrow to the appointed places and drop their voting papers in the ballot boxes. On the following morning the great city presented a very animated appearance. Large processions were formed to carry with due ceremony the urns, or ballot boxes, to the various mosques, Greek and Armenian churches, synagogues, police stations, and other public buildings, in which the voting was to take place. A typical Mussulman procession which passed me was composed as follows: First came a military band and a small escort of infantry; next a carriage draped with Turkish flags, containing the voting urn and a few officials; lastly, a motley Mussulman crowd of voters and others, including *imams*, accompanied by theological students, pupils of the artillery and naval academies and numbers of happy school-children, conspicuous among which was a band of tiny Moslem girls, wearing veils and waving miniature Turkish flags as they toddled along by the side of some tall gendarmes who brought up the rear of the procession. This and the other processions which I met moved through the crowded streets to the accompaniment of martial music, the singing of patriotic songs, occasional cheers for liberty and justice, and the waving of many flags. These were, indeed, the most good-

humoured and happiest election demonstrations one remembers to have seen in any country; there were no party cries or manifestions of party feeling of any sort; all seemed to be thinking of the good of their country alone, and to be rejoicing in its liberation. The Greeks and Armenians had similar processions, also headed by military bands (for these had been lent to all sections of the electorate by the authorities), and here, too, the priestly element was largely represented. At one manifestation which I saw in Stamboul the Turk and Armenian electors joined forces, and there were to be seen in the combined procession Mussulman *hodjas* and Armenian priests in their full Mohammedan and Christian canonicals, walking hand in hand in amity. For awhile goodfellowship reigned everywhere in this city of rival creeds and races. To judge from appearances it might have been concluded that "Fraternity," which has been the watchword of all revolutions, has for the first time in history been brought about in Turkey, of all countries in the world.

But when the voting commenced it was made manifest that the brotherhood of creeds and races in Turkey had not yet been realised. The Turks, Armenians, Latins, Syrians, and Jews recorded their votes without any difficulties arising, and in many instances voted for the same candidates. But the Greeks, who, according to the Œcumenical Patriarch, number one hundred and fifty

thousand in Constantinople, created a good deal of disturbance, after the manner of their brethren in Athens on similar occasions. In many parts of Turkey the Greeks complained bitterly of the electoral irregularities which, so they alleged, had been committed at their expense, and rioting occurred in Smyrna and elsewhere. So the Greeks in the capital, protesting that they had been very badly treated, organised noisy demonstrations which caused the elections to occupy several more days than had been intended.

The polling opened on a Friday, and it was made evident that the Greeks had come into the streets on the look-out for trouble. It was noticeable that when a man of another race was not permitted to register his vote on account of some irregularity in his papers or other disqualification he went away quietly, whereas the Greeks in like circumstances stayed to protest and bluster until they formed crowds of disappointed voters who blocked the way to the urns, and by so doing considerably delayed the course of the election. On the following morning the Greek leaders hurried about Pera collecting the people, and ordered all the Greek shopkeepers to close their shops, which they promptly did. Others got into the belfries of the Greek churches and rang the bells violently to summon the crowds, and soon the main streets were packed with excited and clamouring men. Seeing that they practically

all carried revolvers and knives it is wonderful that but few accidents occurred throughout the demonstration. The authorities took due precautions. Certain points were occupied by troops, and bodies of cavalry and infantry patrolled the streets, in no way interfering with the demonstration, but awing the demonstrators by their very presence, for the inhabitants of Constantinople knew of what stuff are made these soldiers who trooped slowly by, silent, stolid, apparently indifferent to all that was going on around them, in striking contrast to the noisy rabble which gave way before them. On the Sunday the church bells again rang out their appeal, and thirty thousand Greeks having assembled in Pera marched through Galata, crossed the Golden Horn by the bridge of boats and came to the Sublime Porte, where they insisted that the Grand Vizier himself, Kiamil Pasha, should come out to speak to them. When that aged statesmen did appear to explain that full justice would be done to them by Parliament should they be able to show that the alleged irregularities had occurred, these people, who but a few months before were afraid to open their mouths if any representative of the dreaded Government was near, insulted Kiamil Pasha by shouting out to him that his verbal assurances would not suffice for them, and that they must have his undertaking in writing. This attitude, of course, brought the conference to

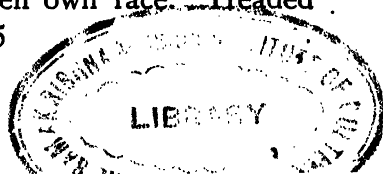
an end, and the Grand Vizier retired. It became necessary later to employ the cavalry to clear the streets, but, wonderful to say, only two casualties, and these slight ones, were reported for this day. The troops displayed a great forbearance and behaved admirably under conditions calculated to try their temper.

Observing the indignation and distress of the Greeks, one would have supposed that they had been very badly treated. As a matter of fact their clamour was chiefly caused by disappointment at the failure of their scheme to obtain a much larger representation in Parliament than their numbers warranted. Their point of view was that the Greek element of the Turkish population, being the most civilised and cultured, was the best fitted to undertake the government of the country, and, being Greeks, they considered that any means were fair which could forward their aim. The Greeks are the only people in Turkey who understand election trickery, and they were assisted in their last autumn's campaign by clever and, of course, absolutely unscrupulous electioneering experts from Athens. Taking advantage of the ignorance of the lower class Moslems they obtained votes by various fraudulent devices and misrepresentation. The Greeks flocked to the polls whether they were entitled to a vote or not. Impersonation both of the living and the dead was largely practised. In Turkey,

each voter, on coming up to the voting place, has to show his *hamidieh*—the official paper testifying to Ottoman nationality and date of birth. It was discovered that Greeks not entitled to the vote had been provided with the *hamidiehs* of dead men and of people who had left the country. In some cases, too, the stamps which are impressed upon the *hamidiehs* to show that the vote has been registered had been erased, thus enabling an *hamidieh* to be used by a succession of would-be voters.

The Greeks would now be represented by a powerful party in the Turkish Parliament had not the Committee of Union and Progress kept a close watch on them during the elections. The Greeks have themselves to blame for the under-representation of which they now complain. They compelled the Committee to exercise an influence in the elections which, though technically unfair, was fully justified by the circumstances. The liberty so recently won had to be safeguarded by the return of a solid majority of patriotic Turks to the Chamber of Deputies.

The Greeks, gifted as they are with administrative capacity, held high appointments under the old *régime*, and will no doubt do so to a greater extent under a constitutional Government; but as a people they have yet to prove themselves loyal Ottomans. During the elections their one thought was for the interests of their own race. Headed



by the Œcumenical Patriarch, they demanded the maintenance of all the privileges that had been granted to them from the time of the Turkish conquest. The Moslems have had to give up their special rights, but the Greeks refused to surrender a single one of their privileges for the sake of Ottoman unity. The Greeks chatter about liberty, equality and fraternity, but their aim is to secure to themselves advantages over the other Christian peoples; and the Patriarchate, the most cruel and intolerant ecclesiastical tyranny remaining in the world, makes use of "liberty" to increase its persecutions of the exarchists and other schismatics. In the ranks of the reactionaries are to be found many Greeks who profited much by the Despotism whose parasites they were. A large number of the Greeks in Turkey still cling to their separatist aspirations. Even as I write this the Greeks in Macedonia are breaking the peace which the Young Turks brought to that long harassed land; for large Greek bands are once more in the field, with no shadow of a grievance as their excuse for brigandage this time, but agitating for various things, including the annexation of Crete to Greece. If the great Powers would act together and let it be clearly understood that under no conceivable circumstances will Greece be permitted to annex another foot of Ottoman territory, the Greeks in Turkey

might become the useful citizens of a united country; for they, like all the other peoples in European Turkey, would prefer even a Hamidian despotism to the domination of Germany, Austria or Russia.

CHAPTER XX

The opening of Parliament—Internal dissensions—Criticisms of the Committee of Union and Progress—Resignation of Kiamil Pasha—Nationalist parties in Parliament—The Liberal Union—Ismail Kemal Bey—Campaign against the Committee—Reactionary intrigues—Corruption in Constantinople.

On December 17 Abdul Hamid drove through the streets of his capital between cheering crowds to open the Turkish Parliament. The scene has been often described, and it is unnecessary here to relate again the events of that memorable day. That night I sailed through the Dardanelles, and on either side of me, on the shores of both Europe and Asia, every little town and village, and the anchored fleets of fishing craft in the harbours, were brightly illuminated; isolated farm houses on snowy hillsides had their windows full of lights; fires blazed on many a lonely peak; and so it was all along the shores of Turkey from the Adriatic and the Ægean to the Black Sea and the shores of the Persian Gulf. It was a day and a night of rejoicing, and so contagious was the sincere enthusiasm that even the most cynical foreigner in the land had not the heart to speak otherwise than hopefully of the future of this freed country.

Some months have passed since that winter's day. As might have been expected, things have not gone altogether smoothly in Turkey, and there have been reports of internal dissension that have puzzled and alarmed the English well-wishers of the new *régime*. As regards the open rebellions against the Government that have occurred in various portions of the Empire, no one imagined that the proclamation of a Constitution would suddenly bring peace, once and for all, to restless races that have been fighting and raiding for centuries. The complete pacification of these regions cannot but be a work of time. The lawless Albanian tribes are again carrying on their organised brigandage, even in that Dibra district where Niazi Bey's propaganda had been so wholly successful; the Northern Albanians are agitating for autonomy, even as they were thirty years ago when I wandered through their highlands; Turkish troops, even as I am writing this, are defending Armenians against raiding Kurds;[1] risings of fanatical Arabs in Arabia are being suppressed; and the Greek bands are once more troubling Macedonia. These are unfortunate happenings, but with a Government that combines firmness with justice and patience, this lawless state of things will disappear; and it must be remembered that sheer love of fighting and raid-

[1] This was written before the counter-revolution and the terrible massacre of Armenians that followed it.

ing rather than political disaffection is the cause of some of these disturbances. These revolts and raids had become almost chronic complaints under the old *régime*; the world is now watching Turkey; events that would have passed almost unnoticed a year ago are reported in the European Press, and their importance is naturally overrated by those who read of them.

But the political dissensions among the Turks themselves—which have been much embittered of late—are more alarming to the friends of Turkey than are any of these risings of lawless peoples. This is no time for the patriotic element to be divided against itself, and it behoves the Young Turks to present a solid and united front to the many external and internal enemies of Turkey's liberty and the Empire's integrity. The Committee of Union and Progress, the deliverer of Turkey from the Despotism, has enemies in the land who are unsparing and unscrupulous in their attacks, and most cunning in their intriguings. The anomalous position of the organisation has naturally invited some honest criticism. Almost immediately after the proclamation of the Constitution, not only reactionary Turks and politicians jealous of the Young Turk party, but also European friends of Turkey, including certain British diplomatists and a section of the Press that voices their views, began to urge that the Committee, its work having been accomplished, no longer had

a *raison d'être* and should be dissolved at once. It was pointed out that an irresponsible power behind the Parliament was unconstitutional, and that the Committee, with its unknown leaders, had become an illegal institution now that Turkey had been granted representative government.

Now surely this argument savours of a legal pedantry that ignores surrounding conditions. The Committee was, of course, an illegal institution from its inception; it saved Turkey by illegal methods; a revolution cannot but be an illegal operation: and it would be obviously unsafe on the morrow of a successful revolution—when a nation is still in confusion, when the people have yet no idea how they should exercise their new rights, when the new institutions, from their very freedom lie open to the attack of cunning foes—to adhere strictly to constitutional technicalities and legalities, and to break up the strong organised power that has brought about the overthrow of a *régime*. After our own revolution Cromwell had no scruples in violating law to save a cause. If there had been a strong Committee of Union and Progress behind the Constitution which the Sultan swore to observe on his coming to the throne, Turkey might have been saved thirty years of despotism and the loss of much territory.

The Young Turks fully realised the difficulties and dangers before them. Many were the foes of the newly freed fatherland. There were those of

the Great Powers to whom constitutional liberty in Turkey meant interference with their designs to enrich themselves and obtain territorial expansion at Turkey's expense; there were the smaller Powers on the frontier, Bulgaria, Servia, Greece, eager to scramble over the partition of Macedonia; and, far more dangerous than these, there were the Turkish reactionaries, who began to intrigue everywhere against the Constitution immediately after its proclamation, ready to seize their chance when they saw it. The Young Turks in their hour of triumph had freely pardoned all save a few of the worst of the creatures of the Palace, but this great clemency gained them no gratitude. It was also a source of no small danger that the Young Turks, having but few trained administrators in their own ranks, had retained the services of such high officials of the old *régime* as had no notoriously evil records for corruption or oppression. Some of these men are the secret enemies of the new order of things. The Young Turks, therefore, determined to remain on their guard and see to it that Turkey's newly won liberty was not wrested from her. As I have stated in a previous chapter, they held that, far from losing its *raison d'être* on the opening of Parliament, the Committee of Union and Progress would be more necessary than ever for the protection of the country, and they decided not to dissolve this powerful organisation, but to maintain it legally

or illegally, supported as heretofore by the army, until such time as the Constitution should be firmly established. Such was their justification, and they were sincere in their explanations of their resolution.

As will have been gathered from what I have said in this book the Committee of Union and Progress is no small body of patriots. When I was in Turkey it numbered seventy thousand members. I understand that it now has a membership of about a hundred thousand. It includes all that is best and most patriotic of the educated young Moslem manhood of the country. There are now the many Christians, too, on the Committee who have rejected the idle separatist aspirations of their several races and have Ottoman unity as their ideal, and also many of those Jews who from the beginning have co-operated loyally with the Young Turks. When I was in the country last autumn it looked much as if this Committee had as its members nearly all the men to whom it would be safest to leave the guidance of the Empire.

Unfortunately, it seems to be an undoubted fact that the Committee of Union and Progress has made many enemies even among those who cannot be accused of reactionary tendencies. The Committee has undoubtedly done some ill-advised and tactless things, and its arbitrary methods have raised up against itself some

relentless foes; but there can, I think, be no doubt that it has been actuated throughout by pure and patriotic motives, and that its errors have been those of zeal and inexperience. I have met several members of the party recently, and they all sincerely believe that the Committee had very good reasons for compelling Kiamil Pasha to resign the Grand Vizierate in February last; they are confident that the aged statesman had been misled by the plausible enemies of Turkey's liberties and was being duped by reactionaries. The friction between the Committee and the Grand Vizier commenced some months before the opening of the Parliament; Kiamil, being a Pasha of the old school, naturally resented the dictation of the Committee, and complained that while his was the responsibility the Committee held all the power. The Committee was alarmed by Kiamil Pasha's friendly relations with the Liberal Union, the party in opposition to the Committee, and recognised the insidious work of reactionary influence when Kiamil despatched from Constantinople to Macedonia certain battalions that were faithful to the Committee, thus imperilling, in the eyes of the Young Turks, the safety of the constitutional cause in the capital. When the Grand Vizier, without consultation with his ministers or with the party, suddenly dismissed the Ministers of War and Marine, the nominees of the Committee,

and placed others in their stead, the crisis was precipitated. The Young Turks, above all things, were determined that those in whom they did not place implicit confidence should not control the army, so the Committee, even as it had compelled the resignation of Said Pasha, because he had left the appointment of the Ministers of War and Marine in the hands of the Sultan, now insisted upon the resignation of Kiamil Pasha, and effected its purpose in so peremptory a way that it lost much of its popularity with the people and afforded its unscrupulous enemies a handle for attack. The intrigues connected with the fall of Kiamil Pasha need not be discussed here; but one gathers that the man chiefly to blame is Kiamil's own son, Said, a worthless person who enriched himself by co-operating with the brigands in the neighbourhood of Smyrna. On several previous occasions he has compromised by his intrigues his aged father, the one person in Turkey who believes that there is no real harm in this very bad specimen of a young Turkish gentleman. Of Kiamil Pasha's successor to the Grand Vizierate, Hilmi Pasha, I have already spoken.

The Committee justified its treatment of Kiamil Pasha and its other arbitrary acts by pleading the necessity of protecting the nation against the strong reactionary forces which certainly do exist, despite the assertions of the organs of

the Liberal Union, which have ever ridiculed the possibility of a reactionary movement, and have accused the Committee of having invented this bogey as an excuse for its own despotic methods. Kiamil Pasha had ever been the friend of the English, and his removal from the Grand Vizierate produced—to the great regret of the Young Turks—a somewhat bad impression in England, the country above all others whose friendship is valued by patriotic Turks. Those who had held that the Committee was an illegal institution and ought to be dissolved became alienated for awhile from the men who had been the saviours of Turkey; and it is a great pity that this was so, for at that critical time the Young Turks, who never before had trod the tortuous ways of politics, and were apt to fall into the traps that were cunningly laid for them, were much in need of the sympathetic help and advice from those whose experience and knowledge qualified them to offer these. The result is, I think, that the Young Turk side of the question has not been understood in this country.

The Young Turk party, as represented by the Committee of Union and Progress, is now but one of several parties in Turkey professing Liberal principles. In Parliament the Committee's nominees form the large majority; but the rival parties, though they may be numerically small and were regarded as insignificant when I was

in the country, have displayed great energy in winning supporters outside the Chamber, and are no longer a negligible quantity. Though diametrically opposed to each other in their principles, they appear to be united in their hatred and jealousy of the Young Turk party, without whose self-sacrificing struggle for freedom they would never have had an opportunity of existing at all. The Young Turks, as I have explained, desired Ottoman unity, perhaps an impossible but certainly a noble ideal, and it was a disappointment to them that, so soon as Parliament met, the Deputies who were not partisans of the Committee divided themselves into distinct nationalist groups, some of them impracticably socialistic in their aims, others separatist at heart.

By far the most powerful of these groups, a composite party, composed of Moslems, Christians, and others, calls itself the Liberal Union. Whereas the Young Turks, while advocating equality without distinction of race or creed, insists that the supremacy of the Mussulman Turks should be safeguarded, desires to bring about a fusion of the different elements, and wants no greater administrative decentralisation than is necessary; the Liberal Union, on the other hand, is opposed to what it terms Turkish Chauvinism, and asks for a degree of decentralisation which the Young Turks regard as dangerous to the

integrity of the Empire. The Liberal Union therefore stands for home rule. It is largely supported by the Greek element, and this fact does not commend it to those who desire Ottoman unity. It is understood that the party has been well supplied with funds by the Greek merchants in Turkey, who are ever generous in their subscriptions to a Greek national cause; but one cannot feel that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire is safe in their hands. A source of weakness to the Committee are its self-denying principles, whereby there are to be no known leaders, no gratification of personal ambition by its members, and no seeking for the plums of office. The Liberal Union has no such principles of self abnegation, and it has for its leader the Albanian Ismail Kemal Bey, a victim of the Despotism and for some time an exile, a man of marked ability and of great ambition. He left the Young Turk party on the grounds that its principles were not sufficiently Liberal, and formed this party of his own, which is the bitterest and most unscrupulous enemy of the Committee of Union and Progress.

The organs of the Liberal Union have been carrying on a Press campaign against the Committee of Union and Progress. Among other things they have asserted that the best men have deserted the Committee, that the heroes of the revolution, such as Niazi Bey and Enver Bey, have left it in disgust, that reactionaries and self-

seeking adventurers have worked their way into the Committee's centre and are directing its policy. It is, of course, possible, and even probable, that some unworthy men have been admitted into the Committee, but I am certain that they have exercised no influence, and I am of opinion that they would not have been allowed to remain in it after their true characters had been discovered. When I was in Turkey last autumn it was not altogether an easy matter to become a member of the Committee. On more than one occasion when I have asked a member whether some mutual friend was in the Committee, he has replied in the negative, explaining that the person in question had expressed his wish to join the Committee, and that he seemed a fitting person, but that the Committee would not elect him until more was known concerning him. As to the allegations made by the organs of the Liberal Union, many of the most active members of the Committee, men obviously actuated by the sincerest patriotism, are my friends, and I know that not one of them has left the Committee or has lost faith in it. I also know that the single-minded patriots who made the revolution are still members of the Committee. Both Niazi Bey and Enver Bey have flatly contradicted the statements that were made concerning them.

The Young Turks who write to me from their own country or who converse with me in

London are unanimous in describing the situation as serious, but in their opinion the Committee is too strong for its enemies. They say that the Sultan himself is on the side of the Committee, and disapproves of the machinations of the Liberal Union. They maintain that whatever professions of Liberalism the Liberal Union may make it is reactionary in its policy, has known reactionaries within its ranks, and is led by self-seeking politicians lacking in patriotism. They allege that many of the Greeks who support the Liberal Union, having thrived as parasites of the old *régime*, prefer despotisms to constitutions. They, moreover, explain that some members of the Liberal Union are exceedingly clever and cunning men who have succeeded in winning over honest men of the Young Turk party—including *ulemas* and other strict adherents of the Mussulman creed—by specious arguments and misrepresentations. All this seems probable, and it is certain that numbers of the Young Turks, though true patriots, are simple-minded honest men who are likely to be duped by the trained intriguers among the Committee's enemies.

One gathers, therefore, that an incongruous alliance of non-Moslem socialists, Greek separatists, reactionaries, and misled upright Mussulmans is opposed to the Committee of Union and Progress. A most malignant Press campaign is being carried on against the Committee, and the

AASSIM BEY. The Editor of the *Shura-i-Ummet*, the official organ of the Committee of Union and Progress. As a Member of the Secret Society in Salonika he took a leading part in preparing the Revolution of July, 1908. During the counter-revolution in April, 1909, the Constantinople offices of the *Shura-i-Ummet* were destroyed by the reactionary mob. The words written by Aassim Bey on his portrait signify: "To my esteemed friend, Mr. Knight, a souvenir of fraternity, from his brother Mason, Mustafa Aassim Bey."



organs of the Committee strike hard in return, with the unfortunate result that on either side an intense hatred has been engendered which cannot but be injurious to the country's interests, imperils the Constitution, and plays into the hands of Turkey's external foes.

The Committee of Union and Progress is not rich and has not attempted to enrich itself; but it appears that the Liberal Union is well supplied with funds wherewith to carry on its campaign, purchase newspapers, and buy the consciences of men. It is known that the Greeks have been the largest contributors to these funds. The Palace gang is also said to have supplied its share. When I was in Constantinople I was informed that the Committee had intercepted correspondence between the Palace and a certain Pasha—who was then an exile in England passing under various aliases—and had obtained proof that this notorious person was the trustee of large sums lying in London banks which were intended to meet the expenses of intriguing for the restoration of the old *régime*. Certain foreign Powers, which have no love for the Young Turk *régime*, have also been openly accused of intriguing with the reactionaries. If they are innocent of this they have but themselves to blame for the suspicion that attaches to them, for one can only judge of their present policy by regarding their past. How unscrupulously Germany exploited the old *régime*

is known to all the world. Some of the Germans whom I met in Constantinople expressed their conviction and their hope that the days of the new *régime* were numbered. It was interesting to hear these men, who represented the political commercialism of their country, frankly state, as if it were an incontrovertible axiom, that all European peoples, whether German, British or any other, had for their one aim in Turkey the exploitation of a helpless country. The Germans are perfectly sincere when they assert that the Balkan Committee is the paid agent of a cunning British Government, that the expression of British sympathy for oppressed nationalities is organised hypocrisy with the attainment of selfish ends as its one motive. As they look with their cold, blue eyes into yours you realise that they quite believe these things. The materialism of modern Germany has so sunk into the souls of her sons—including some of the most illustrious of them—that it has become inconceivable to them that a nation, or a group of the citizens of that nation, can take a disinterested interest in the affairs of other nations and sympathise unselfishly with its misfortunes or triumphs. To the Germans the enthusiasm with which the success of the Young Turk cause was welcomed in England was all humbug—a cleverly engineered manifestation of friendship whose object it was to secure for Great Britain the influence in Turkey which

Germany had lost by the revolution but confidently looked forward to recovering at an early date by more straightforward if, more brutal methods.

The thirty years of despotism, by its deliberate encouragement of corruption, had demoralised a great part of the Turkish nation. The cure cannot come in a day, and those well provided with money can still buy power in Constantinople. It was amid very corrupt surroundings that the Young Turks, pure themselves, set to work to undertake the regeneration of Turkey and to make the Empire strong. To begin with, Constantinople is full of men who have lived by corrupt practices all their lives—the men who were blackmailing spies under the old *régime*, or had belonged to that huge tribe of useless functionaries who used to crowd every public department and had to be bribed by those whom business brought into contact with them. All these people, their occupation now gone, are wandering about the capital in very disconsolate mood, hard up, regretting "the good old days," and hating the purifying influence that has brought this change about. These men are all reactionaries; many of them know well how to poison the minds of ignorant people against the Committee with cunning inventions. They are largely responsible for the growing popular dislike of the Committee. It is very difficult for the people in

the capital to arrive at the truth, and they are largely at the mercy of paid agitators and schemers. Even foreign Governments are able to influence public opinion in Turkey. The Germans and Austrians possess a useful piece of machinery for the dissemination of news to serve their own interests in the shape of a telegraphic agency which supplies Constantinople with practically all its foreign information, and sells its despatches by the column to the newspapers of that city at a low rate that cannot possibly pay the expenses of the service. The news which purports to come from London is often of an astonishing character.

I understand that the Committee of Union and Progress is now about to reorganise its constitution and convert itself into what we should call a Parliamentary party; but under whatever name it continues its existence it is to be hoped that this body of men, which has done such great and noble work for Turkey, which contains so many men of single-minded, self-sacrificing patriotism, will remain the dominating party in the country. But it will have to be as the strong man armed and ever watchful, for its enemies are many and have the money wherewith, alas! the consciences of both men and newspapers can still be purchased in Turkey.

CHAPTER XXI

The counter-revolution—The demands of the mutinous troops—Murder of Young Turks—The Sultan grants an amnesty—A new Ministry—The Young Turks prepare to crush the reactionaries—The Macedonian army marches upon the capital—Defeat of the garrison and capture of Constantinople—The deposition of Abdul Hamid—The new Sultan.

THE greater part of this book was in the press, and the preceding chapter, which was to have been the final one, lacked but a few concluding paragraphs to bring my work to a close, when the news reached London, that a revolution had broken out in Constantinople. On that eventful thirteenth of April I was lunching in a literary club off the Strand with two well-known members of the Young Turk party. The information conveyed by an early issue of a so-called evening paper was scanty, and we hoped that nothing worse had occurred than one of those mutinous demonstrations on the part of the Sultan's pampered Bodyguard which the Young Turks have already proved themselves capable of suppressing with promptitude and vigour. But later and fuller information brought anger and sorrow to the friends of Turkey: nearly the whole garrison of

the capital had risen against the Government; the soldiers were killing their young officers; fanatical mobs were hunting out the members of the Young-Turk party to murder them; the Committee of Union and Progress, in Constantinople at any rate, was at the feet of its enemies.

The members of the Committee were flying for their lives from their fellow-countrymen, whom they had saved from a hated despotism. A few months ago I heard these same Constantinople mobs shouting themselves hoarse with cries of "Long live the Committee of Union and Progress!" and all seemed grateful to this band of men who, animated by single-minded patriotism and a spirit of self-sacrifice, had organised the revolution. But a large portion of the population of Constantinople is a very vile thing; it is made up of everything that is worst of the various races of the Levant and of regions further east. The fanatical Kurds are ever ready to join in any rising that gives them the opportunity of pillage and murder; the greater part of the Christian population is too cowardly to defend itself; here, too, are collected all the ex-spies and other corrupt products of the old *régime*. One is inclined to think that one of the chief lessons to be learnt by the Young Turks from the counter-revolution is that the seat of Government might with advantage be removed from Constantinople to some place at a considerable distance from it. My Turkish friends, I may

state here, were perfectly confident, through those mid-April days when Turkey's future seemed so dark, that the triumph of the reactionaries would be but short-lived, that right would prevail, and that within a few days the provinces, strongly supporting the Young Turk cause, would compel the capital to submit to their will.

I have postponed the writing of this final chapter until the last possible moment, in order that I might obtain a perspective view of these strange happenings in the Turkish capital. As may be gathered from the preceding chapter, there was a good deal of uneasiness in Constantinople for some time before the outbreak of the 13th. The bitter strife between the Committee of Union and Progress and the Liberal Union weakened the constitutional cause. A newly formed society called the Jemiyet-Mohamedieh (the League of Mohammed) was obtaining a hold upon the Moslem population. It professed to be in favour of the Constitution, but called for a strict application of the Sheriat or Sacred Law. It was the enemy of the Committee of Union and Progress, maintaining that the members of the Committee, including the young army officers, did not observe the precepts of the Koran, and by their irreligious ways set a bad example to the rank and file. These movements afforded an opportunity for mischief to the reactionaries, the men who cared little for religion or country, but

desired the return of the absolutism with the corruption on which they had lived. So men from the Palace, together with ex-spies and dishonest Government *employés* who had been deprived of their posts by the new *régime*, began to intrigue with success, and were much helped by the fact that many of their own base order had wormed themselves both into the Liberal Union and the Mohammedan League.

The Liberal Union apparently took the lead in the plot against the Government, and it became obvious that it was well provided with funds. I am told that for a considerable time before the outbreak the members of this association used to frequent the principal hotel in Pera, and made of it a sort of head-quarters. Here, spending plenty of money, they used to converse plausibly with foreign visitors, including the correspondents of newspapers; for it was part of their aim to gain foreign sympathy—and especially English sympathy—for their cause; their efforts were attended with some success, for while plotting with reaction they prated of liberty and their arguments to the effect that in the Committee of Union and Progress Turkey had but found a new despotism in place of the old one were convincing to many.

The acrimony of the strife between the two parties was much intensified by the assassination of the editor of a Liberal newspaper, presumably

by some one in sympathy with the Committee; and as it became clear that the loyalty of the First Army Corps, forming the garrison of Constantinople, was being undermined by the agents of reaction, General Mukhtar Pasha, who was in command of that army corps, began to take due precautions; on April 12 he issued most stringent orders to his men, explaining to them that they were to shoot down even *softas* and other civilians if ordered to do so by their officers. I have already explained that the fidelity to the Constitution of this army corps, which included the pampered Palace Guards, had been doubtful from the beginning. The Young Turks, after the mutiny in November, had removed some of the least reliable battalions and had replaced them with troops from Salonica. They had intended to greatly reduce the Imperial Guard itself, but had refrained from doing so at the earnest wish of the Sultan. I have pointed out that before the revolution these Palace troops were officered with men risen from their own ranks—*alaili*—ignorant and faithful men who could be relied on to support their benevolent master the Sultan. The Young Turks had removed these rankers, replacing them with *mekteblis*, officers who have passed through the military schools, and therefore to a man are supporters of the Young Turk party, many of them being members of the Committee. There is no doubt that the rank and file bitterly resented

this innovation, and there grew up a sullen discontent, which subtle agitators who appealed to Mussulman fanaticism could easily fan into a flame. The *hodjas* and *softas* were assiduously preaching in the barracks that the Committee was endangering the Moslem faith, and the minds of the men became poisoned against their officers.

But though there was uneasiness in the capital, the counter-revolution came to the citizens as a complete surprise. In the afternoon of the 12th, a British officer, who had just arrived in the capital, visited the various barracks, and found the troops peacefully drilling or performing their other ordinary duties, the officers and men alike seeming happy and contented, and an Inspector of Police of great experience informed him that the city had never been more quiet and orderly. During the early hours of the 13th, while it was still dark, people were awakened by the tramp of soldiery in the streets (successive bodies of men marching in silence), wondered a little what these unwonted movements signified, and then went to sleep again. When they went out a few hours later the citizens found the whole city at the mercy of nearly twenty thousand mutinous troops. The plot had been carefully organised with the same extraordinary secrecy that had characterised the Young Turk revolution of the previous July, and no one save those concerned had any suspicion as to what was about to happen.

Before dawn the troops, after shooting some of their officers and binding and imprisoning others, marched through the streets under the command of their non-commissioned officers, and concentrated in the neighbourhood of the House of Parliament. The Salonica Chasseurs, who, as Macedonian troops, had been regarded as being wholly loyal to the Young Turk cause, took a leading part in the revolt. A large number of marines also joined the mutineers and were guilty of the murder of many officers. When the sun rose the square outside the Parliament House and the Mosque of St. Sophia was packed with the mutineers and a great number of *softas* and *hodjas* in their turbans and flowing robes, who harangued the soldiers and inflamed their fanatical zeal. In front of St. Sophia waved the red and green banner of the Sheriat. Brave officers who occasionally arrived to remonstrate with their men were immediately killed.

It was apparent that the revolt had been very carefully planned, and that the troops had received detailed instructions which they obeyed to the letter, and there can be no doubt that they were assured that they were doing as the Padishah wished them to do. Bodies of troops were detached to seize the bridges and the telegraph offices, and dispositions were made to meet resistance from any point. It was made quite clear that the main object of the counter-revolution

was the destruction of the Committee of Union and Progress; for, while killing officers and others who belonged to that association, the soldiers preserved order, in no way interfered with the civilian population, and spoke reassuring words to the Christians whom they met. But notwithstanding this, there was, of course, a panic in the city, and all the shops put up their shutters. Mobs of Mussulmans of the dangerous class, Kurds and Lazes, armed with pistols and clubs, and in many cases with rifles, joined the soldiery; but even these had apparently been given the word that excesses would damage the cause of the faithful, for the massacres and pillage which might have been expected from this rough and fanatical element of the population did not occur.

The conspirators had not secured the support of the entire garrison of Constantinople; for troops loyal to the Government—cavalry, artillery, and infantry—were holding the Ministry of War on the morning of the 13th. General Mukhtar Pasha, the commander of the First Army Corps, was on duty on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, and he has told an interviewer that the signal for revolution had been purposely given while he was absent. So soon as he was informed as to what was happening he hurried back to Stamboul, and on reaching head-quarters on the morning of the 13th found the Ministry of War surrounded by a wildly excited mob. He collected the troops

who had not joined the mutineers and dispersed the crowd with his cavalry. He states that had he been given full powers he could have nipped the revolt in the bud, and that had the Ministry taken the proper measures in time the mutiny could have been mastered without bloodshed. But Mukhtar was expressly impeded from taking energetic action and, as the natural result, his own troops began to desert him. When Mukhtar heard that the Sultan had issued an amnesty to the mutineers he realised that he could do no more, and resigned his command. He only escaped the death that had been prepared for him by taking a circuitous route, and ultimately found a refuge on a foreign man-of-war.

The demands that were made by the mutineers showed pretty conclusively that the plot had been arranged by the Liberal Union working hand in hand with reactionaries and fanatics. The troops cheered loudly for the Sultan, called for the strict application of the Sacred Law, the overthrow of the Government, the destruction of the Committee, and the removal of the officers of the Salonica Chasseurs and the marines. The following specific demands, which could never have been thought out by the ignorant soldiers, who know nothing of politics, were also put forward by them — demands which had obviously been prompted by the Liberal Union—the dismissal of the Grand Vizier, the Ministers of War and

Marine, the commander of the First Army Corps, and the President of the Chamber of Deputies; the removal from Constantinople of the editor of the Young Turk newspaper, the *Tannin*, and the expulsion of Rahmi Bey and Djavid Bey, Deputies for Salonica, and members of the Committee of Union and Progress. The soldiers also asked that Ismail Kemal Bey, the leader of the Liberal Union, and his supporter, Zohrab Bey, should be made President and Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies. Their acts as well as their words proved who had instigated them to revolt; they murdered Nazim Pasha, the Minister of Justice, and wounded the Minister of Marine; they killed the Emir Mahomed Arslan, a highly respected Deputy, as he was entering the House, mistaking him for the editor of the *Tannin*, and they destroyed the offices of the Committee of Union and Progress, as well as those of its organs, the *Shura-i-Ummet* and the *Tannin*.

During April 13 the reactionaries ruled Constantinople; the members of the Committee of Union and Progress had to take to flight or hide themselves, and several of the Generals crossed the Bosphorus and took refuge in the house of a well-known British merchant. The Liberal Union, which had let loose the forces of disorder, enjoyed but a short triumph. In the evening of the 13th some Deputies met in the House and elected the Liberal Union leader, Ismail

Kemal Bey, as President of the Chamber—an illegal proceeding, as there was no quorum, and the Young Turk members who represented the parliamentary majority naturally were not present. In the course of the day Ismail Kemal and some members of the Liberal Union went to the Yildiz and begged the Sultan to appoint Kiamil Pasha, who was a supporter of the Union, as Grand Vizier, but the Sultan refused to listen to their advice. From this time the Liberal Union lost its hold on the people, and was deserted by many members of the party who were good patriots and adherents of the Constitution, for these recognised and were horrified at the mischief that had been wrought by the self-seeking wire-pullers of this so-called "Liberal" organisation.

And in the meanwhile all eyes were turned anxiously to the Yildiz to discover what would be the attitude of the inscrutable monarch at this crisis. In the evening of the 13th, when the Sultan granted an amnesty to the mutineers, called them his children, and yielded to many of their demands, there were lovers of liberty who feared the worst; but when it became known that the Sultan had not taken immediate advantage of the situation to restore absolutism, but, on the contrary, on the resignation of the Young Turk Ministry in the afternoon, had appointed Tewfik Pasha as Grand Vizier and Edhem Pasha as Minister of War, great relief was felt; for these

were two trusted and able men, who, though they were no partisans of this or that political group, were undoubtedly men of Liberal principles and no creatures of the Despotism. So the Constitutionalists took heart, and they were still more reassured when on the 15th Nazim Pasha was appointed Commander of the First Army Corps and Assistant Minister of War. The appointment of Nazim Pasha as Minister of War in February last had roused the opposition of the Committee of Union and Progress, and was one of the chief causes of the fall of Kiamil Pasha; but, as the Young Turks clearly explained at the time, it was with Kiamil's policy that they found fault; Nazim himself was admired and respected by them as a fine soldier and a man of distinctly Liberal views, for which the Palace had made him suffer in his time. It was therefore recognised that the newly-created temporary Government was at any rate not a reactionary one, and that the cause of liberty, though still in great peril, was not yet lost.

For twenty-four hours the soldiers celebrated their victory by firing off their rifles in the streets, thereby accidently killing and wounding a good many people. It was noticed that they had plenty of money to spend, and it was evident that a large sum had been provided by the organisers of the conspiracy to buy the support of the army. As many of the men confessed afterwards, they

had succumbed to gifts of money and had been misled by lying preachers who approached them in the name of religion. On April 15 Nazim Pasha, who is popular with the army, though a strict disciplinarian, announced that the severest punishment would be inflicted on any soldiers who fired in the streets, and explained that the Sultan's amnesty only protected them from punishment for crimes committed during the two previous days. Next he released all officers who had been imprisoned by the mutineers, and warned the soldiers that no mercy would be shown to those who molested these officers or any of the civilian population. The bulk of the troops now returned to their barracks, order was restored, and outwardly Constantinople was once again a city of peace.

But a crime had been committed with what far-reaching evil results to Turkey no man knows yet. This wanton conspiracy, doomed to failure from the beginning, not only threatened the destruction of the Constitution, but, stirring up all the forces of reaction, sent a wave of fanaticism sweeping through Asia that it will be difficult indeed to stem. It has brought about the massacre of Christians, civil war, the fratricidal fighting between Turkish armies, the menace of foreign intervention, and the possibility of the disintegration of the Empire itself. The counter-revolution soon bore its evil fruit. On April 15

telegrams from Mersina, in Asia Minor, announced the beginning of those massacres which have cost the lives of thousands of Armenians. It is probable that the reactionaries planned these massacres, for the fact that certain notable Armenians were warned as to what was about to happen by their Moslem friends, disproves the theory that a chance affray was responsible for all this slaughter; at any rate, the outbreak of murderous fanaticism would have been suppressed speedily had not the authority of the Government officials on the spot been destroyed by the revolt in the capital. Then came the news of a rising of the Moslem Albanians, whom the agents of reaction had converted into the bitter enemies of the Young Turks. During these days of doubt and fear for patriotic Turks, but one event of hopeful augury occurred. On April 19 the Turko-Bulgarian Protocol, by which Turkey recognised Bulgaria's independence, was signed. The provisional Government had acted wisely, for thus was removed the danger of a war with Bulgaria at this very critical time.

A member of the Young Turk party said to me: "If the reactionaries imagine that we will take this lying down they will find themselves much mistaken. We are very strong: practically all European Turkey is on our side, and you will see that we will now set to work to crush the power of the reactionaries once and for all." And

so indeed it has come to pass. When the news of the counter-revolution reached Salonica, the city that is proud that it was the cradle of Turkey's liberty, the inhabitants—Moslems, Christians and Jews—were infuriated, and called for an immediate march upon Constantinople. To Salonica flocked the officers and other members of the Committee who had escaped from the capital, and thither, too, hurried the two gallant young leaders of the July revolution, Enver Bey and Hakki Bey, who at the time were the Turkish military *attachés* in Berlin and Vienna respectively. Niazi Bey, too, in Monastir, sent the word to his Albanian and Bulgarian friends to collect volunteers, and he himself, with the regulars under his command, took train to Salonica. And now it was made manifest that Macedonia, at any rate, remained faithful to the Constitution and to the Young Turk party. The men of the Third Army Corps were eager to be led against the traitorous reactionaries of the capital; the civilian Moslems formed themselves into bands of *fedais*; all the Bulgarian clubs in Macedonia declared themselves the supporters of the Young Turk cause, and their members expressed their readiness to die in defence of the Constitution, and this despite the fact that the Bulgarians had not been treated fairly during the Parliamentary elections; the famous Bulgarian chiefs, Sandansky and Panitza, and other Bulgarian

leaders, brought their bands of enthusiastic mountaineers to Salonica; the Albanian Christian mountain tribes, including my old friends the Miridites, sent their armed men to fight for the cause; the Jews volunteered in numbers; indeed, of the various elements composing the population of Macedonia the Greeks alone appear to have held aloof.

In Constantinople the reactionaries, notwithstanding the appointment of a Ministry that supported the Constitution, had taken it for granted that the success of their cause was assured, and, having seduced the garrison to their side, they but awaited the order of the Sultan to complete their work and give the *coup de grace* to the *régime* of liberty. They had apparently omitted to consider whether the rest of Turkey would support their action; for the news from Macedonia came as a shocking surprise to them, and irritated the well-named *Volkan*, the organ of the League of Mohammed, into an eruption of furious articles of a highly inflammatory and dangerous character. First came the news from Salonica that the Committee of Union and Progress refused to acknowledge the new Government, and that the Macedonians intended to march upon Constantinople. On April 16 a telegram announced that the first sixteen battalions of the Constitutional army (the Third Army Corps) had already entrained at Salonica. Next it became known that

the Second Army Corps at Adrianople had agreed to support the Salonica force. On the 19th the advanced patrols of the avenging Macedonian army were at St. Stefano, within two leagues of the capital. It was all in vain that the Government sent telegrams and deputations to Salonica to reassure the Young Turks and to explain that the Constitution was in no danger, and would be respected by the Sultan and his new Ministry, for the Young Turks could not be brought to believe that the Constitution was secure while the capital was full of triumphant reactionaries and troops who had been bought over to their cause, acting in the name of a Sultan whom it would be folly to trust again.

So the parliamentary troops began to concentrate round the capital, and the reactionaries lost heart. The Palace spies and other deeply compromised persons thought it prudent to flee from the capital. A friend of mine, writing from Constantinople, tells me that a panic seized the people, including many Europeans, and that their hurried departure to catch any steamer in the port, bound for no matter where, was comic, but lacking in dignity. On the other hand, the different Liberal political groups, Moslem, Christian and Jew, agreed to put aside their party differences and to unite in upholding the Constitution. The Committee of Union and Progress recovered much of the influence and popularity

that it had lost, for it was recognised that this organisation alone had the power behind it to enforce the will of the people and defeat the reactionaries. It became plain, too, that the Ministry itself was co-operating with the leaders of the Macedonian army, so as to come to some arrangement that would safeguard the Constitution and at the same time prevent, if possible, the shedding of blood. As for the Sultan, he remained in the Yildiz, inscrutable as ever, and had frequent conferences with Tewfik Pasha, his Grand Vizier, who announced that "His Sublime Majesty awaits benevolently the arrival of the so-called constitutional army. He has nothing to gain or fear, since his Sublimity is for the Constitution and is its supreme guardian."

No preparations for defence or resistance of any sort were made by the Government, and Nazim Pasha and the other Generals in the capital confined themselves to maintaining order in the garrison and preventing any fanatical outbreak on the part of the rough element of the Moslem population. Of the troops forming the garrison a considerable proportion repented that they had taken part in the mutiny, and, acknowledging that they had been misled by lies, were ready to take the oath of fidelity to the Constitution; but, on the other hand, a great many, including the six thousand who were guarding the Yildiz, were faithful to those who had deceived

and bribed them, and were prepared to die for the Sultan.

General Husni Pasha rapidly brought up the troops that were to invest the capital, the bulk of them belonging to the Third Army Corps; but the force also included contingents from the Second, or Adrianople, Army Corps and numbers of volunteers, for the most part Moslem Macedonians, Bulgarians, and Albanians, wild-looking men from the mountains clad in their picturesque native dress. General Mahmut Shevket Pasha, the commander of the Third Army Corps, directed the operations, and on the 21st he left Salonica for the front to take over the supreme command of the army of investment. Foreign military observers have spoken in terms of highest praise of the rapidity with which the Third Army Corps was mobilised, the admirable organisation, the discipline, *morale*, and excellent condition of the troops, the arrangements for the supply of food, the completeness of the equipment of the force, which included field hospitals, field telegraphs, and other details. The Turkish army has profited much by the splendid training of Baron von der Goltz and the German officers under him, and has become a fighting machine which will be able to give a very good account of itself if the enemies of Turkey venture to attack her.

It is unnecessary to give an account here of the various negotiations which were carried on

between the Ministry in Constantinople and the advancing army, for it is clear that these were mostly simulated with the object of keeping the capital quiet and gaining time until Shevket Pasha had collected a force sufficiently large to overawe the reactionary portion of the garrison and so secure the entry and occupation of Constantinople with as little bloodshed as possible. Of the many statements made at this time by the Ministry and the Young Turk leaders, one stands out as important and significant. The Committee of Union and Progress, recognising that this was no time for any political party to assert itself, and that all friends of liberty should unite to save the Constitution, announced its intention of remaining completely in the background and not intervening in any way, while the army, acting quite independently, would free the Constitution from the fetters which traitors had placed upon it. The army, it was maintained, had nothing to do with politics or parties. It was the army of the nation, and it was for Shevket Pasha, representing the army, to redeem its honour by entering the capital, proclaiming martial law, and severely punishing the traitors who had corrupted the soldiers and used them to forward their reactionary schemes.

The army of investment increased in numbers daily, and on April 22 a semi-circle of thirty thousand men enclosed Constantinople on its land

side, while men-of-war guarded its sea approaches. On that day a National Assembly, composed of Senators and Deputies, with Said Pasha as President, held a secret session at St. Stefano, within the lines of the investing army, and apparently agreed on the deposition of the Sultan. On Friday, April 23, Abdul Hamid, for the last time, was the central figure of the Selamlik and drove to the mosque between faithful Guards and a crowd of many thousands of his subjects. Only ten days had passed since the counter-revolution had restored to him much of his former despotic power, but the action of the Young Turks was quick and decisive, and this was to be the last day of his long and calamitous reign.

Shevket Pasha, having completed his dispositions, lost no time in further parleying, recognising that to do as speedily as possible what had to be done would probably save much bloodshed in the capital, and prevent the further spreading of the dangerous reactionary movements in Asia Minor and Albania. At three in the morning of April 24 the Macedonian troops, regulars and volunteers, began to work their way into the city from all sides, and proceeded to occupy Stamboul, Galata and Pera. They entered Stamboul by the principal gates that pierce the ancient walls, encountering resistance at one gate only. Near the Sublime Porte a portion of the garrison offered a determined resist-

ance, which was overcome by Niazi Bey, at the head of the Resna battalion, and a band of Macedonian volunteers. Some of the guard-houses had to be taken at the point of the bayonet. The entry into Stamboul of the parliamentary troops seems to have taken a great part of the garrison by surprise, for Shevket Pasha, in his official report, states that "the troops quartered at the Ministry of War were compelled to surrender before they had time to defend themselves."

On the further side of the Golden Horn the fighting was more severe than in Stamboul. Shortly after 5 a.m. firing commenced in the outskirts of Pera. The Macedonian troops attacked the Taksim and Tashkishla barracks, which were defended in most stubborn manner by desperate men who thought that they would receive no mercy, and there was fierce street fighting in the European quarter, where the guard-houses were bravely held by the misguided men of the First Army Corps. From the Tashkishla barracks a heavy fire was opened upon the advancing troops, and the barracks had to be shelled and almost destroyed by the artillery on the heights above, before the garrison, after several hours' fighting and heavy losses, surrendered.

Equally desperate was the defence of the Taxim barracks, the attack on which was led by Enver Bey. This young officer, who, during the months that preceded the revolution, had wandered, dis-

guised and at great risk to his life, through the Macedonian garrison towns, and there, though surrounded by spies, had successfully won officers and men over to the cause, like his friend Niazi desired no recognition of his patriotic work, and, modest as he is able, was glad to accept the simple post of military *attaché* at Berlin. Recalled by his country's danger when the counter-revolution broke out, he joined the army at Salonica, and now, on April 24, he was leading across the Takim Square a charge of regular troops and volunteers—Moslems, Christians and Jews—fighting shoulder to shoulder against a Moslem foe, a strange thing, indeed, to come about in Turkey. These men fought splendidly under their young leader, but so deadly a fire was opened upon them from the loopholed barracks that here, too, artillery had to be employed to overpower the defence. Guns were dragged up the steep, narrow streets by the willing populace and opened fire at very short range upon the barracks and the Taxim guard-house. Then there was a rush of the Turks, Bulgarians and white-capped Albanians, and the defenders, after a three hours' resistance, which cost the attacking force many casualties, hoisted the white flag and surrendered.

While barracks were being thus assaulted, and there was hand-to-hand fighting in the streets ot Pera, the commander-in-chief of the Macedonian forces had made most careful dispositions to

preserve order in the great city and protect the civilian population. A detachment of troops was sent to guard each embassy. Bodies of regulars, cadets and volunteers patrolled the streets of Pera and Galata, shooting down such Marines and Kurds as were attempting to loot the shops, and making prisoners of all the soldiers belonging to the garrison whom they came across. In Stamboul the troops seized hundreds of spies, *softas* and *hodjas*, who, after stirring up the evil passions of the garrison and the populace, had taken refuge in the mosques. By noon, quiet had been restored in Constantinople, and in the evening the troops quartered in the Selimieh barracks at Scutari surrendered to the Macedonian regiments which had been transported across the Bosphorus to compel the submission of these men, and to intercept fugitives from the capital.

These operations were all planned and carried into execution with a wonderful skill. The discipline, courage and irreproachable conduct of the Macedonian troops aroused the admiration of all foreign observers. The wild-looking volunteers from the mountains fought as bravely as the regulars, and their behaviour was exemplary. That evening nearly twenty thousand fighting men, flushed with victory, were scattered through the great city, and yet there appear to have been no cases of drunkenness or irregularities of any description. The suppression of the counter-

revolution has provided a good object-lesson to show the world what manner of men the Turks are and of what things they are capable. It was the triumph of the right cause—the cause that represents enlightenment, justice, liberty and true patriotism—as opposed to tyranny, corruption, fanaticism and ignorance.

The capital was in the hands of the Young Turks; the forces of reaction had been crushed; a state of siege was proclaimed; some thousands of arrests were made; the more guilty received the punishment which they deserved, and the others were treated with leniency, for, while justice was administered, anything that savoured of vengeance was disallowed; the First Army Corps was disbanded and the mutinous soldiers were sent to Macedonia, where they are to be well employed in constructing the much-needed roads; Tewfik Pasha and his ministers sent in their resignations, but withdrew them at the desire of the Deputies and consented to carry on the government provisionally.

In short, the Young Turk *régime* was firmly re-established by men who acted with discretion and decision after a crisis that perhaps has done more good than harm, for it has cleared the atmosphere and effected a reconciliation between such political foes as have in common the love of country and the determination to uphold the Constitution.

In the meanwhile the great Yildiz Palace, its guard of Prætorians dispersed, was closely surrounded by the Macedonian troops, and within it was the Sultan Abdul Hamid, deserted by most of his cowardly courtiers, awaiting his doom. Men discussed the question as to whether he would be permitted to remain on the throne, or be deposed, or be executed. There were some who loved him not, yet thought that the deposition or putting to death of the Sultan might be impolitic, for they feared lest such a step might rouse the fanaticism of Asia and plunge the Empire into civil war and anarchy. On the other hand, there were those who felt that, after all that had happened, it was impossible that the Parliament could ever again work in co-operation with Abdul Hamid; for the Young Turks were convinced that the Sultan had betrayed them, and had connived at the reactionary plot. They could never trust him again. They maintained that if any power was left to Abdul Hamid, the Palace would be a centre of intrigue against the Constitution, and that if he was retained on the throne it could only be as a nominal ruler, without authority, closely watched, ever suspected, a Sultan by sufferance and in name only, and, as such, one whom the Mohammedan world could no longer look up to with respect as its head. The Young Turks settled this difficult question with their usual decision, and adopted the strong and uncompromising course of action which,

in the face of danger, generally, proves to be the wisest.

Early in the morning of April 27 the National Assembly held a meeting with closed doors under the presidency of Said Pasha. A *fetva*, drawn up according to ancient usage by the *fetva emini*, in the form of question and answer, and signed by the Sheikh-ul-Islam, was read to the assembled members. The following is a summary of the *fetva*: "If an *imam* of the Moslems tampers with and burns the sacred books; if he appropriates public money; if, after killing, imprisoning and exiling his subjects unjustly, he swears to amend his ways, and then perjures himself; if he causes civil war and bloodshed among his own people; if it is shown that his country will gain peace by his removal; and if it be considered by those who have power that this *imam* should abdicate or be deposed, is it lawful that one of these alternatives be adopted? The answer is *Olur* (it is permissible)." Then the Assembly unanimously voted that Abdul Hamid should be deposed. Deputations from the Parliament at once waited on Abdul Hamid and on the legitimate heir to the throne, Abdul Hamid's younger brother, Mohammed Reshad Effendi, to announce to the former his deposition, to the latter his accession to the throne as Mohammed V. Reshad Effendi, followed by a crowd of picturesque, ragged and enthusiastic Macedonian volunteers, then left his residence, the

Dolma Baghche Palace, and drove to the War Office, where he was proclaimed Sultan, and a salute of 101 guns announced the momentous news to the fickle population of the capital, which cheers the new monarch whenever he appears in public quite as enthusiastically as it had cheered Abdul Hamid a few days earlier. Throughout the reign of Abdul Hamid, his brother Reshad lived as a State prisoner in the Dolma Baghche Palace, guarded by Prætorian troops, and jealously prevented from holding intercourse with the outside world. After thirty-three years of luxurious but depressing isolation, Prince Reshad now changes places with his elder brother, the former going from captivity to a throne, the latter from a throne to captivity. The new Sultan is an amiable man, beloved by his entourage, and he has already produced a favourable impression on such foreigners as have been received by him.

Many are the difficulties and dangers that face Turkey's new monarch, and the ardent patriots among his subjects who are striving to bring about the regeneration of their country. The Young Turks have been tried and strengthened by adversity, and look with a brave confidence to the future of the Ottoman Empire. These men deserve to succeed, and they have many of the qualities that command success.

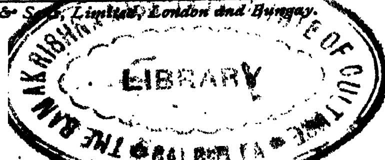
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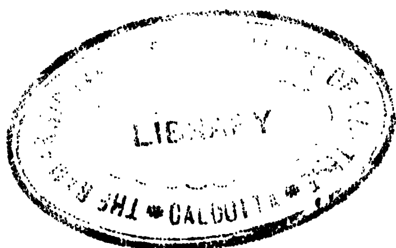
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